







# No Hour of History



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# NO HOUR OF HISTORY

*A Novel*

ELISABETH FORD



IVES WASHBURN • NEW YORK

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*For*

**ANDREW WATRES FORD**



**With the exception of Victoria Ash and  
of persons who are designated by their  
real names, all characters in this book  
are entirely fictitious.**



# No Hour of History



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**A**FTER Victoria Ash's death, Landis found a curious collection in a pigeonhole of Victoria's old walnut desk.

There was a line-a-day diary containing only two entries. The first, dated April 29, read: "Went to the races at Longchamps today." The second, dated two months later, noted: "Cleaned church cupboards with the Ladies' Aid Society." The other pages were blank.

Next, neatly rolled inside a small cardboard cylinder, was a certificate of membership of the Aberdeen-Angus Breeders' Association of America. It bore Victoria's name. Beside it was a letter written on heavy white paper engraved with the name of a President of the United States. The letter, written by the President himself, thanked her for the gracious hospitality extended to him in her home. Then came a dozen or more receipted bills, clipped together, from Worth and Patou and various millinery and lingerie shops in the Rue de la Paix and Rue Royale. Last was a thin bundle of letters snapped with a rubber band. They were short, gay, amusing notes, all beginning "Darling Victoria" and signed with the name of a man who had once been Secretary of the Treasury.

It seemed to Landis that the contents of the pigeon-

hole compressed the life story of Victoria. She hid from the Indians of the Iowa prairie when she was two years old. She sat on the terrace at Shepheard's in Cairo when she was fifty. She knew the Cavendish in London and the tables at Monte Carlo. Yet she died as she was born, within the sound of the rustle of the cornfields of her native Middle West. She was essentially its child and the product of its background and environment. She would have resented the suggestion that she was a "character." She would have protested that there was nothing unique about her life. She would have said that she was no different from the thousands and thousands of other women brought up under similar circumstances. Perhaps she would have been right.

Victoria's daughter, Landis, was wrong in thinking that in the pigeonhole of the old walnut desk lay Victoria's whole life story. Holmes, the wise physician, said that man is an omnibus in which all his ancestors ride. To know the history of Victoria, one must go back to Richard Ash and his coming to the New World. One should go back still further to still other Ashes, against their backdrops of Agincourt and Crécy, an island in the Thames named Runnymede, a field called Hastings.

**1630–1690**



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THE first Ash who came to America was Richard, who sailed with Governor Winthrop on the *Arbella* out of Southampton. Eighty-three days later, on June 12, 1630, the tiny vessel, named after Lady Arbella, the high-born wife of another passenger, Isaac Johnson, dropped anchor in Salem harbor. John Winthrop wrote in his diary: "We had fair sunshine weather and so pleasant a sweet air as did much refresh us; and there came a smell off the shore like the smell of a garden."

It is not known whether Richard Ash rejoiced in the fair sunshine and the sweet air and the smell of a garden. Down through three hundred years a single significant adjective has clung to Richard's name. It is "grim." In that day of the stocks and the psalms, the gallows and the meetinghouse, all men were grim. Yet it was as "grim Captain Richard" and "grim Master Ash" that he was christened by those who knew him. He must have been stern, indeed, to have been so called by his fellows.

The bare facts of Richard Ash's life are meager matters of record. He was the son of one Richard Ash, of Wreningham, Sussex, England. The matriculation book of Gonville and Caius College of Cambridge contains

this entry concerning his father: "Ash, Richard, of Wreningham, Sussex, son of Richard Ash, deceased. School, Norwich, four years; at Corpus Christi College, six months. Age 21. Admitted May 12, 1580." The family possessed a coat of arms. Young Richard sailed on the *Arbella* with money in his purse. He was a gentleman.

He came to America in 1630 and settled in Boston, where he lived until 1642. He moved to Wreningham, near Boston, and here held various prominent civil, military and religious offices and owned numerous pieces of property. He was captain of the Train Band, a military organization to fight the Indians. He died at Wreningham, in New England, in 1690. In the churchyard, his grave is not only marked by his tombstone, but also by a monument erected to him as an illustrious citizen. This is the outline of Richard Ash's life as substantiated by historical documents.

On August 27, 1630, he was among the colonists with whom Governor Winthrop organized the First Church of Boston. The instrument was drawn at Charlestown. The church itself was "a low thatched-roofed building, which was soon removed and one was built where Brazier's building is on State Street." Under the date of September 8, 1635, one reads in the church records that "Allice wife of our brother Richard Ash signed the covenant." He was then in his early twenties and had probably been married but a short time. Where his marriage took place or what was his wife's maiden name is not known. He was admitted freeman of Boston May 25, 1636, and on November 23 of that year, he became a

member of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company. On March 21 of that same year he had been granted a lot upon which to build, choice being limited to lots "not being built upon and one free to be otherwise disposed of." He selected a site on Washington Street, nearly midway between the present West and Boylston streets, where he erected a house and surrounded it with a garden. Here he lived for six years, when the *Boston Town Proceedings* recorded: "Granted to our Brother Richard Ash to sell his house and yarding, April 11, 1642." On May 8 of that same year, the records of the First Church of Boston read: "Our Bro. Richard Ash was granted by the church to be dismissed to ye church at Wreningham at theer desire with ye Office of Deacon amongst you." Richard was ordained deacon in Wreningham on July 21, 1642. This office he held to the day of his death.

Wreningham had been incorporated as a town in 1640. Richard has assisted at its incorporation and had chosen its name, after that of his birthplace in England. Boston owned considerable tracts of land in the new town, and claimed still others to which the claim was disputed. As a representative of Boston, Richard was sent there to guard the town's interests. It was "agreed with Richard Ash of Wreningham that he should be in the towne's behalf take care that noe wast or strip of wood or timber be in the land belonginge to this towne lyinge neere theier towne but do his utmost to prevent it, or give information to the Selectmen." Richard Ash was plainly a trusted agent of the town of Boston.

In Wreningham he held numerous offices. He was se-

lectman and deputy to the General Court, the highest office the town could bestow on him. He was nominated by persons of prominence there and in near-by towns to administer their estates and was also appointed by the court to administer the estates of others. The greatest recognition which came to him, however, was that of captain of the Train Band. In 1654 he was appointed to this office, which was a much-coveted honor. It was not until thirty years later, on October 15, 1684, that the records of the General Court read: "On request of Captain Richard Ash being 73 years of age and the infirmities of age upon him: having formerly desired, and now again today to lay down his place as chief military commander in Wreningham, the court granted the request and appointed Lieutenant Henry Sydney to succeed him."

In 1689 Allice, his wife, died and Richard followed her a year later. In the churchyard over his grave stands today the slanting slab with this inscription:

Here lyeth buried  
Ye body of grim  
Captain Richard Ash  
Deacon  
Deceased March 14  
1690

These are the recorded facts of the life of the Richard Ash who went to his grave three thousand miles from the golden gorse of his native Sussex.

Why did he set out on far-flung adventure to a New World? What did he say to Allice, his betrothed wife,

when first he kissed her? Why did they name their youngest child Isobel, so wayward a name for one whose brothers and sisters were properly christened Increase and Foresight and Patience and Abraham? What did Richard think as he looked into the sunset and did he talk to his dog? Dust-dimmed records are misers hiding their hoards, and three hundred years are so long.

The story of Richard Ash as it has come down is a story mostly of dates, and dates are only digits, and dead. There does emerge, however, in the stories handed down from Ash father to Ash son a Captain Richard who is no lay figure. There are tales of his broad fields and fertile meadows, of his fine house of brick and stone, of his Train Band, the finest in all New England.

Captain Richard did not build his house among the unpainted clapboard ones of his fellow townsmen, although in Wreningham, as in all towns of that day, the parsonage, the burying ground, the tavern, the smithy, and the homes of the villagers clustered within a restricted compass. A man walked a mile or more to reach his fields outside the town. Captain Richard's house, however, facing the end of the village street, was in the village and yet apart. It was of bricks brought from Holland, with heavy white-oak framework, and built with many peaked gables and tiny windows set with precious greenish glass. Behind it lay the golden-thatched granaries and barns, the malt house, the chicken houses, the orchards, the beehives, the herb garden with its basil, wormwood, garlic, periwinkle, anise, rue, and half a dozen other plants.

It was in this fine house of brick, so different from its

humbler clapboard neighbors, that Increase and Fore-sight and Patience and Abraham and Isobel of the wayward name grew out of childhood. The girls learned weaving, spinning, knitting, candlemaking, wool washing, soap boiling. And all were instructed in the cate-chism.

It was from this same fine house that grim Richard went forth to make war on evil Philip, King of the Wam-panoags. With him went his Train Band, the finest in all New England. Other Bands might be clad in wadmal, but Captain Ash's men had every one a steel helmet and breastplate, painted black to foil the sun's rays. If a man's weekly pay of eight shillings was not sufficient, the Band's captain gave him more from his own purse. Up and down New England the Band went with their captain, aveng-ing the scalped child and the murdered mother, the withered granny and the inglenook sire, the massacred garrisons within the stockades around the meetinghouses.

There was peace at last. Captain Ash came home once more. One day, perhaps sooner than he knew, young Richard was old Richard, and he was writing his last testament. He sat alone in the wide low room which served as his office. The walls were of white plaster, with smoky brown rafters. A Turkey-red carpet, they say, covered the floor. The dresser was bright with pewter. Above the fireplace was Richard's sword and on the man-tel a silver tankard gleamed with the Ash coat of arms. Richard took his quill pen and began to write quickly with no hesitation. His was an ordered, decisive mind to the very end. The will, which is still extant, reflects the man who wrote it. It reads:

January 29, 1689.

I, Richard Ash of Wreningham in New England, being mindful of my mortality and being of memory and of a disposing mind and trusting in God through Jesus Christ, my only savior for eternal life salvation, revoking and making null all former wills by me made, do make and ordain this my last will and testament as followeth.

My will is that all my just debts, if any be, be first paid, and funeral charges be defrayed.

Item. I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife, Allice Ash, all my estate in housing, orchards, lands, and meadows in Wreningham for her comfortable sustenance during her natural life, as also the income from my properties in Boston.

Item. I give to my sons Increase Ash and Foresight Ash and Abraham Ash and to my sons-in-law David Chesney and John Richardson my properties in Boston, to be equally divided between them.

Item. My will is that the division of my properties in Boston, as above disposed, shall be made by indifferent men, the persons concerned in each fifth part to choose one man.

Item. I give unto my daughter Patience my great bible for her use during her life, and on her decease to be given to my grandchild Mary Richardson.

Item. I give to my grandchild Rachel Ash five pounds in current pay and my bedstead and bolster which her mother carried away without my knowledge.

(Signed)

Richard Ash.

Richard's will proved that he was just as well as grim, and human as well as just. His daughter-in-law smuggled away a bedstead and a bolster, but Richard had his revenge. After three hundred years and more her pilfering is a matter of record of which all may read. He must have permitted himself one of his rare smiles when he finished

that concluding paragraph.

The fire had burned low. The candle guttered in its pewter holder. The sands of the glass on the table had run out.

Before another year had greened and grayed, Allice was dead and Captain Richard Ash also.

The days of his life had been so narrow and so constricted, yet so high with adventure and wide with deeds. No other Ash would ever know again the spaciousness of living of those perpendicular Puritan days.

"O brave new world, that has such people in 't."

**1690–1856**



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**T**HE fine brick house of Richard's did not remain long to those who followed. Fire claimed it, and only two great stone chimneys, gaunt against the sky, were left to recall its pride. Richard's lands were sold and scattered. The coat of arms and the family crest were used no more. There was no heirloom silver. There were no ancestral portraits. Glamour had gone the way of the daffodils, the roses and the asters in Allice's garden.

The Ashes had settled down to the business of marrying and burying, burying and marrying with which an everyday folk in an everyday world are concerned. Dates in the parish register and new gray slabs in the graveyard were the only milestones left of their long lives. They counted among their number no Colonial Governors. They boasted no Signers of the Declaration. Nathan Ash, Richard's great-great-grandson, died bravely but not spectacularly at Saratoga in 1777, before its surrender to Horatio Gates by Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne. Occasionally some son of the family would win local recognition as a doctor or lawyer. Captain Richard listed himself as "husbandman," and husbandmen the Ashes continued to be for the most part. Usually along with tilling the soil, the oldest son would have some other source of in-

come, often a small mill or cooperage. Theirs was a prosaic existence.

They made no hour of history.

Yet they were tenants of no man, and beholden to no man. No Ash was a publican, and none sold sugar over a counter. Even as Richard's house, they were of the countryside but held themselves apart. Without knowing why, they felt they differed from those with whom they associated in daily life. They had a certain deep pride and an unanalyzed sense of superiority. A man may try to hide a complex of inferiority under the mask of egotism, but he is never arrogant. The Ashes had an inner, unconscious arrogance.

Shortly after the Revolution, the younger Nathan Ash, Victoria's great-grandfather, moved from Wreningham to the foothills of the Adirondacks above Albany. He continued farming, as did his son, James, who became a man of considerable wealth and importance in the countryside. James was known as Squire Ash and in a lesser way assumed something of the role which grim Richard had over a century before in Wreningham.

It remained for Victoria's father, David Ash, who was born in 1825, to make the first break in the Ash tradition. Ice brought down by a spring freshet the year David was seventeen changed the whole course of the boy's future life. During the previous summer a small and apparently sturdy bridge had been erected over the river not far from the Ash homestead. David had watched each step of its progress with unusual interest. When it was swept away by the freshet the following April, he listened

quietly to the proposal that a scow be built to ferry passengers across the stream until a new bridge could be erected the following year. On the night before the town meeting at which the building of the scow was to be voted upon, he went to his father.

"I can put up a temporary bridge in less than two weeks that will serve until next year," he told an astonished Squire Ash. "I can do it for fifty or fifty-five dollars."

His father listened incredulously, although he recalled the unusual interest which his son had displayed in the building of the lost bridge. "How do you account for the failure of the bridge to stand up against the freshet?" he asked practically.

"With the piles driven no deeper than they were, there should have been an abutment on the upstream side to turn aside the current," David answered instantly. "For an abutment I'll build a strong log crib filled with rock. The bridge that went out wasn't safe even if there hadn't been a freshet."

To his own surprise, Squire Ash was finally convinced. He told his son that he himself would contribute \$15 toward the new bridge if David could raise the rest of the necessary amount. This David did, although some of his pledges were only for the sum of twenty-five cents. When he had \$55 collected he recruited local men, purchased lumber from the local lumberyard, and in ten days there was erected under his supervision a span that served until another bridge could be built the following year.

The summer after his first adventure in bridgebuild-

ing David spent every spare moment riding about the countryside. It was the day of the covered bridge over whose boards wagons and buggies clattered in summer while swallows flew about the eaves above and through which sleighs screeched in winter over a bare floor on which there was no snow. David did not know that he was looking at a type of bridge that dated back to Babylon on the Euphrates and 783 B. C.; he only knew that he wanted to build bigger and better bridges than those he found within riding distance of his father's farm.

When the big new bridge was started across the river below Albany the following year David was among those who built it. He never returned to the work of the quiet farm whose peaceful fields and wooded slopes lay along the upper Hudson. In the years that followed he became a builder of railroad bridges.

David Ash knew change and adventure as none of his name had since those first days. He built bridges in nine states and in Canada. More than once he was shot at with intent to kill and nearly lost his life at sea. Then, after ten years of a wealth of living, he settled down to as quiet an existence as his fathers before him. The difference was that he chose as a background a new land over a thousand miles to the west.

On one of his periodical returns to his father's home between construction work, David had married tall, slender, serious-eyed Elizabeth Cartwright. The old Cartwright place, as it was called, adjoined the Ash land. The farm attached to the house had long been sold. There remained only the house high on a hill and a small buckwheat field and garden patch. The house itself was fall-

ing into decay. Its Doric columns reaching two stories in height across the front were chipped and broken and many of the leaded panes of the fine fanlight above the paneled front door were missing. Within, the house was scantily furnished. Most of the second and third floors were filled with useless, broken pieces of heavy Colonial mahogany furniture. Once the Cartwright family had been one of the most important in the country. Elizabeth's father, Robin, was a wastrel and a drunkard, however. Gradually he had sold his land and now almost nothing remained. Had it not been for his wife, who had had a thrifty Dutch grandmother in Rensselaer County, there would have been times when the family would have gone hungry. In some fashion she managed for Robin and herself and their two daughters. Both Elizabeth and her younger sister, Caroline, were pretty, sad-faced girls who went out seldom and had few friends. Their mother had taught them herself instead of sending them to school. Their girlhood was not a happy one.

Robin Cartwright was neither a good husband nor a good father, but he did possess picturesque charm. For many years tales were told of his dark handsomeness, his courtliness of speech and manner, his fabulous trips to Glens Falls where his drinking prowess aroused no little admiration. It was in front of the town's principal tavern that he threw silver dollars at the passers-by. Where he obtained the dollars was a matter of conjecture.

He had been to the village on Elizabeth's fourteenth birthday. He returned less intoxicated than usual, although it was obvious that he had been drinking heavily. He came home shortly after supper, waving aloft a pack-

age, which he handed to Elizabeth.

"For my dear's birthday," he said with his slow and winning smile which had made friends for him since baby days.

Elizabeth's present was a book. Oh, what a book! Mrs. Cartwright gasped. Elizabeth and Caroline were speechless before the richness of its bright blue silk cover, with its beautiful and intricate design in rich golden yellow thread.

"Robin, what it must have cost—" Mrs. Cartwright began.

"Never mind what it cost," her husband interrupted harshly. Turning to Elizabeth:

"Never buy anything cheap, my dear. Don't forget that as long as you live. Look at my coat and see how it still shows the handsome price I paid for it, even if your mother did protest the tailor's bill." He smiled down ironically at his shabby claret coat. "I got the book from John Eames, who brought it up from New York. It was published just last year in England. Open it, Elizabeth. You'll see it's something every girl should have."

He took the book from her and opened it on the table. On the first leaf was the bust of a young girl, in profile, surrounded by an elaborate design in which were urns, young maidens supporting baskets of flowers, griffins and so many other decorative bits that description is an impossibility. The bust was labeled "Victoria" and underneath was the date "1838."

"England's young queen," Robin explained, and turned the page. Here they read:

HEATH'S  
BOOK OF BEAUTY  
1838  
WITH  
Beautifully Finished Engravings  
FROM  
Drawings by The First Artists  
Edited by  
THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON

Robin Cartwright turned the gilt-edged pages slowly and even Mrs. Cartwright stared in admiration. "Rhoda Tracy, or There is No Accounting for the Caprices of Women"; "Stanzas: Containing Some Account of the Property, Last Illness and Death of Love"; "Beatrice, or the Invisible Girl" were among the titles of its stories and verses. It was the pictures of the beautiful women, however, which were interspersed between the reading matter that made Elizabeth and Caroline gasp. Some were the imaginary heroines of the stories. Others were famous beauties of the day.

"She looks a little like you, Elizabeth," Robin said as he turned back to the frontispiece. It was of the lovely Countess of Chesterfield, sloping of shoulders, with soft ringlets falling on either side of a sweet young face. She wore a headdress in the shape of a little pointed diadem. One small hand touched the three strands of pearls at her throat, while the other held an opera glass. Apparently she was at the opera, since in the background draperies indicated a box and on the ledge in front of her rested a program and a nosegay.

"She *does* look like you, Libbie," Caroline exclaimed,

"only you look ever so much more serious."

By this time Mary Cartwright's common sense had reasserted itself.

"Robin, you must take it back. You must take it back tomorrow," she said firmly.

"No."

It was Elizabeth who spoke. Her mother stared at her in amazement.

"But—" Mrs. Cartwright started to protest.

"No," said Elizabeth passionately.

Without another word, she left the room and went alone up the stairs to the big, bare upper chamber she shared with Caroline. She held the blue and gold silken book closely. In all the years to come it went with her to the many distant places where she lived. One of Victoria's earliest memories was of the Sunday parlor and its marble-topped table on which lay two books and nothing else. One was the family Bible. The other was Robin's *Book of Beauty*.

David Ash had known the Cartwright girls from childhood, although they had never played together. Mrs. Cartwright had kept her daughters close to her in the big curtainless house on the hill. She was a proud woman and often the little girls had been ragged. It was not until the summer that Elizabeth was twenty that David really noticed her. It was a warm spring evening and the woods were white with dogwood. He had wandered down by the brook and found her sitting on an old log. Suddenly her serious young face with its light-brown ringlets falling softly on either side seemed to him utterly appealing and altogether lovely. When he came home two summers

later for one of his periodical visits to the Ash home-stead, they were married. Squire Ash was none too pleased with the match, but he held his peace.

Elizabeth, as a bride, wore a white dress sprigged with tiny pink rosebuds. She carried her head as proudly as though she were wearing Lady Chesterfield's little pointed diadem. Robin Cartwright sold the buckwheat field to pay for the gown and the wedding. Elizabeth had protested against the sale, but Mary Cartwright upheld her husband. Elizabeth must be properly married. And so she was, and Robin got properly, but fortunately privately, drunk. As long as she lived, Elizabeth never forgot her shame at the necessity for selling the buckwheat field.

Less than a hundred years ago many a man was born, married, begat children and died scarcely more than a stone's throw from the house in which he himself was born. It was in these limited times that young David Ash and his wife Elizabeth began their married life on a pattern whose spaciousness had never been dreamed of by their fathers. As a builder of railroad bridges, David went from town to town and state to state. Sometimes he and Elizabeth would rent lodgings wherever his work had taken him. On several occasions, when the bridge was especially large and complicated of construction, they would remain a year or more in a town. Then they would take a house to themselves and know briefly something of real home life. When they had a house instead of merely lodgings, Geoffrey Gresley lived with them.

Geoffrey Gresley, who was much older and more ex-

perienced in his work than David, was in many ways remarkable. He was the younger son of an old and honorable English family who had had the ambition to make a name for himself on his own initiative. He had come out from England to Canada and was well established in his profession when David formed a connection with him. He made his home in Ottawa. Here he returned to his family when not occupied elsewhere with his work. It was through his Canadian connections that several construction jobs were obtained in Canada during David's association with him.

The most ambitious of these was at St. John, in New Brunswick, where over a year was consumed in building a bridge. It was on returning to the States from St. John that the Ashes barely escaped disaster at sea. So terrible was the storm that many passengers threw aside their money belts in the fear that they would hinder them in the raging sea in which they expected to be plunged at any moment. The Ash children never tired of hearing of the adventuresome voyage which had occurred at the end of the first year of their parents' married life. They reveled in all the anecdotes of St. John, especially those of the many shipwrecks and rescues which their father and mother saw while living there. "And was the inside of the big bolt of muslin really all dry when it was tossed up on the shore after the wreck?" Victoria would ask her mother over and over. "Yes, quite dry," was the reply, "except the very outside. It was rolled so tightly."

Often in the towns where Mr. Gresley and David were at work there would be opposition to the new bridge. Those who made their living by ferries or who would be

adversely affected in some other way by the bridge would prove dangerous. There would be sabotage. Often the lives of both men were in danger. Both were shot at several times. On one occasion a bullet grazed David's shoulder, inflicting a flesh wound. Neither he nor Mr. Gresley ever went out without a gun.

David loved the life, even to its danger. Elizabeth hated it. A change came over her. Her face lost its gentleness. She wore the soft ringlets no longer. Her hair was combed straight back from her face and twisted on her neck in a severe knot. A certain harshness came over her features and into her sweet low-pitched voice. She knew that David was following his chosen work. There was nothing to do but go on with it, with no complaint, but fear never left her. When she was a girl, she had been afraid of the constantly increasing poverty, of public disgrace which might be brought on the family by Robin, of some physical mishap which might come to her father on his drinking bouts away from home. She had always known fear in some form. Now its causes had merely shifted their ground.

"You were born under the sign of Capricorn and gloomy Saturn is always hovering around you, and that's what's the matter with you," Caroline told her. Caroline had an unshakable belief in her old astrology book. "Now, David and I are Gemini people."

"And what may they be like?" Elizabeth asked sarcastically.

"Oh, we're mercurial and gay and like lots of different things going on all the time. We aren't worriers like you, always thinking about debts and things like that."

"Well, probably the people in the almshouse didn't worry, either."

"Maybe they worried too much."

"Not likely," Elizabeth ended the conversation witheringly.

If Elizabeth were the worrier, as Caroline expressed it, she was also the rock. From the beginning of their married life, she was the comforter, the counselor, the firm foundation of David's life. Long years after, her son said of her: "If the Captain and the crew of a ship were lost in mid-ocean and there was none to bring the vessel to port, Elizabeth Cartwright Ash could do it somehow by herself." After the shooting episode in which David had been slightly wounded, severe headaches came on her from time to time. So racking were they that even the tick of a clock disturbed her. The clock would have to be removed to another room. During the several days which these headaches lasted, David was a lost soul. His desolation was not merely that of a husband whose domestic arrangements were temporarily disarranged by illness. It went far deeper than that. This tall, curly-haired young man who was Elizabeth's husband was no weakling. He had ability, resourcefulness, determination of purpose, but without Elizabeth he was lost. Perhaps he found in her the mother who had died during his childhood.

Two years after their marriage Hallie was born. She was beautiful, with ash-blond hair which did not darken as her mother feared it would. Her eyes were deep blue and her face heart-shaped, with a lovely auroral coloring. Five years later Hallie was followed by her brother James, a sturdy boy who howled lustily and often but

was on the whole a very good baby. Without Caroline's knowledge, Elizabeth looked up his birthday in the astrology book. She was comforted and happy to find that his sign was Leo, the lion, and that he was born "to dominate and to conquer." She had never thought to look up Hallie's birth sign.

Elizabeth left David at his work and went back alone to her father's home for the birth of both of her children. A surprising change had come to the old Cartwright place. After forty years of riotous living, Robin had stopped drinking and turned to religion. He attended services regularly at the crossroads church, and if the suspicion of a cynical smile flitted over his face occasionally, none detected it. Caroline had married a prosperous young farmer whose land was near by. She already had a little boy of her own. The Cartwright house itself had known changes, too. The death of Mrs. Cartwright's father had brought her a small but steady income which she used in putting the home in a more livable condition. The outside had received the first coat of paint it had known in many years and white lace curtains were at the windows.

Mrs. Cartwright was a great comfort and help to Elizabeth both before and after the birth of the children. She possessed a wealth of common sense and a keen sense of humor which not even years of living with her husband had been quite able to take from her and which blossomed afresh now that her life was materially and spiritually easier. It was with her father, however, that Elizabeth spent her happiest hours during these periods. He had always read a great deal, and now he spent more and more time with his books. Shakespeare and the Bible

were his constant companions.

"Jesus and Shakespeare were the greatest men who ever lived, Elizabeth," he would say. "The longer I live, the more sure I am of it. But Shakespeare was greater than Jesus. Jesus could never have known a Falstaff."

Elizabeth was shocked. Such talk seemed to her blasphemous. She could not bear to hear it. Robin would laugh at her, but he would turn the conversation into other channels. He read her Poe, whom he admired very much. He even introduced her to passages of Ovid and Horace. "Listen to the cadence of these lines," he bid as he read Horace's Latin verses:

" 'Quid brevi fortés iaculamur aevo  
multa? Quid terras alio calentis  
sole mutamus? Patriae quis exsul  
se quoque fugit?'

" 'Why do we, so foolhardy, hurl ourselves at so many things in so short a time?' " he translated roughly. "Why do we, Elizabeth? Those are lines you should always remember. All your days you're going to hurl yourself at too many things, want too much. You're too ambitious. You'll drive others because you think all these things are necessary. Oh, you'll drive them because you think it's for their own good, but you'll drive them just the same. And the things you'll want won't really matter in the end at all. Not at all."

"I know I shall want my son to learn Latin and Greek," she murmured, looking at the boy-baby sleeping in the cradle by the hearth.

"Yes, he should do that," Robin agreed. "Every gentle-

man should do that. And then, after all, it's only the treasures of the mind that mean anything really in life."

"Belief in salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord and in the heavenly mansions beyond the grave are greater treasures of the mind than any to be found in your books."

"A spiritual optical illusion born of desire, my dear. Don't look so grieved. I love you too much to hurt you with this talk. Who knows? You don't. I don't. I go Sunday after Sunday to listen to the Reverend Babcock in the hope that he can tell me. I'm getting to be an old man. Someday before so very long I am going to die. And all I can do is to echo Rabelais when he said 'Je m'en va chercher un grand peut-être.' It's all a leap in the dark. I only know I'm going to seek the great perhaps with Rabelais."

The baby wakened and Elizabeth hurried to him. It was a long time, however, before she could put Robin's strange talk from her mind. It grieved and perplexed her. Her father had read so much. He was so infinitely superior in wisdom to the Reverend Babcock, to herself, even to her mother; yet surely he must be quite wrong. For days Elizabeth was lost in the dark shadows cast by her conversation with her father.

It was in the summer of 1858 when Baby James was born that Squire Ash made a memorable trip to New York. He went from Albany on a gold and white steamer which Elizabeth warned him might blow up. The Squire scoffed at her fears, however, in spite of the Hudson River disasters of recent years in which many lives had been lost. "The boilers burst because the captains went crazy

tues of her own position as David's wife and a traveled woman of the world who had seen and lived in far places, she enjoyed no small triumph. For the first time in her life she felt herself to be someone of importance. It was a feeling which she savored over and over in her mind. All her long life to come she was to seek unconsciously this same ideal, and to know peace only when she found it. The little girl who stayed indoors because she was ragged must never again know anything but prestige among her peers, and the feeling of power that goes with this prestige.

After the birth of Baby James, Elizabeth did not return to her father's house for three years. Mr. Gresley and David had completed a bridge at Erie. Mr. Gresley was now going to Ottawa and David intended to accompany his little family to Robin Cartwright's and remain there until his next construction job. Elizabeth was glad to leave Erie. She had not liked the town, nor, indeed, any of the many towns where they had lived so shortly and often so tempestuously. There had never been time nor real opportunity to make friends for herself or playmates for the children. They had become a family without roots. Even the furniture which they bought when they lived in a house instead of lodgings was sold by David before they moved on.

"Gypsies, that's all we are," Elizabeth complained as she sat with her sewing under the evening lamp. "We've been nothing else in all the ten years since we've been married. Yes, I know we've made a good living and saved money, but that isn't everything."

"How would you like to do some gypsying by yourself, David?" Mr. Gresley asked. He made a fine figure of a man as he walked with his quiet dignity across the room for his pipe. He was over six feet tall, with the fair hair and bright blue eyes of his Saxon ancestors. Elizabeth thought that his short, carefully trimmed beard added great distinction to his alert but thoughtful face; David was clean-shaven.

Mr. Gresley's next remark was a bombshell.

"How would you like to go west for me on business?" he continued. "How would you like to go to Iowa for six weeks or so?"

There was stunned silence in the quiet room.

"It happens that I have acquired some land about fifty miles west of the Mississippi River," he went on. "A man sold it to me for just what he paid the government for it, a dollar and a quarter an acre. There are about eight hundred acres in all. He assures me that it is rich soil and that he would have farmed it himself if his health hadn't failed. I have thought perhaps in time the land might prove a proper patrimony for my little Frank when he grew older. I would like to be able to leave him with an estate such as my father's where I grew up among the Surrey hills in England. Perhaps I am wrong and have made a foolish investment. Mrs. Gresley is not well, or I would go myself and look at the land. I hope you will be willing to make the journey for me. Your judgment is good. Look the situation over and see how it strikes you. There is a house of sorts on the land. It may be that you'll think it is a good thing for me to put up some other buildings. There would be time to raise a

barn yet this autumn. Does the proposition appeal to you?"

"But the Indians—" It was Elizabeth who spoke fearfully.

"Do not disturb yourself at all on that score, dear Mrs. Ash." Mr. Gresley spoke with that beautiful courtesy with which he addressed her always. "Iowa has been a state for ten years and the Indians have been driven west to Kansas. I would never have considered asking David to go if I did not know for a certainty that there was not the slightest danger."

So it came about that another thousand miles and more was added to the westward trek of the House of Ash which began when Richard left his Sussex gorse over two hundred years before. Elizabeth took Hallie and James to her father's home. David went west.

**1856–1884**



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**B**Y the time David crossed the mighty Mississippi the white man had nearly finished his dark and dastardly business with the Bronze People. By conquest and chicanery he had slowly driven them westward for two and a half centuries. The brave and simple savage faced only the farther ocean and the setting sun. Civilized man's uncivilized theft of an inheritance was almost complete.

Cruelty and cupidity would have won more quickly had it not been for ignorance. There were no great birds of man-made invention to skim the sky and bring back reports that in the middle of the continent lay another garden of Eden. The prairies were regarded as a vast desert. This belief was sustained by Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike who explored part of the country in 1805. Pike's travels led him to believe that the center of the continent was arid ground with the exception of a strip of fertile land along the Mississippi and the Missouri. He comforted the people of the East by saying that the prairies would restrict the country's population to certain limits and thereby assure "a continuance of the Union."

As late as 1819, according to the Annals of Congress, Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri is authority for the statement:

"After you get forty or fifty miles West of the Mississippi, the arid plains set in. The country is uninhabitable except upon the borders of the rivers and creeks. The Grand Prairie, a plain without wood or water, which extends to the North West farther than hunters and travelers have ever yet gone, comes down to within a few miles of St. Charles and so completely occupies the fork of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers that the woodlands for three hundred miles of each forms a skirt from five to twenty miles wide, and above that distance the prairie actually reaches the river in many places."

The Indians had their last reprieve, and it was short. The fugitive from justice, the adventurer, the ambitious traveler learned soon what the gallant Pike had not suspected. On December 28, 1846, Iowa became a state. By 1850 it had a population of 192,214; by 1860, it had reached 674,913. The tide of immigration was at its height in 1854, and continued through 1856, the year that David went west on his mission for Geoffrey Gresley.

The American immigrant may leave behind his wife and children, his debts and even his religion. He never abandons the printing press. He was stung by the gadfly of self-expression at birth and he never recovers until he dies. As early as 1838, the first newspaper made its appearance in Iowa, at Davenport. Two newspapers appeared in Iowa City, the state capital, as soon as the town was founded in 1840. Numerous others were brought out all over the state shortly. It is the files of these yellowed newspapers that tell the story of the great immigration of which David was a part. A Keokuk paper stated that "by the side of this exodus, that of the Israelites becomes

an insignificant item, and the greater migrations of later times are hardly mentioned." The *Iowa City Reporter* said that at a point beyond Peoria, Illinois, "during a single month seventeen hundred and forty-three wagons had passed, and all for Iowa." A Burlington paper recorded that "20,000 immigrants have passed through the city within the last twenty days, and they are still crossing at the rate of 600 to 700 a day."

So heavy was the railroad traffic from the east into Chicago that trains were obliged to run two locomotives. In twelve months alone four million acres of land were taken up by settlers. Those in line at the land offices froze their feet while waiting. An arrangement was finally worked out whereby numbers were issued by the land offices to eliminate the long delay. Often men were able after receiving their numbers to go home, put in their crops and return before their numbers had been reached.

Caroline had been right when she told Elizabeth that the Gemini David was "mercurial and gay and liked lots of different things going on all the time." He was in his element in this new country. Never once did his eyes leave the window of the train as he made the trip from Chicago to Iowa City, the nearest station to the Gresley land. The ride behind the belching engine with its mighty smokestack over the ill-laid rails on a bed of mud was no small adventure. The road had been completed only after great difficulties of various kinds. Not the least of these were made by the settlers themselves. Many predicted direfully that the steam monsters would cause pregnant women to have miscarriages, and cows to drop their calves before their time. Just as the railroads op-

posed the trucks and buses sixty years later, the stagecoach men and teamsters opposed the railroads in the fifties.

The railroads came, however, and David Ash went with them. (He could not know that one day his granddaughter also would come to Iowa City, but by plane, no train.) When he alighted at the station with his leather trunk and carpetbag, he found a well-established community with sixteen years of existence already behind it. It no longer considered itself a pioneer town, but a sophisticated little city. For many years the capitol building had been in use. When David looked at it in all its classical proportions he felt it had been a queer but fortunate quirk of fate that had sent Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli, a Catholic missionary and Italian scholar there as its designer.

It was the countryside and not the town, however, which captured his imagination and his heart. David had traveled far and seen strange cities but to him the land meant the acres of his father's farm. These acres had the ruggedness and grandeur of mountains for a background but the farm itself with its neat stone fences, its well-kept buildings, its small meadows, its babbling brook, belonged to an old and established order. The prairie burst on him as an incredible vision. Here was width and breadth and abundance without end.

The new West lay before his eyes for the first time in all the wealth and panoply of harvest. Here was fertility unlimited, man's dream of a cornucopia of plenty realized at last. About him in the fields lay the golden grain waiting to be garnered. In the timber near by were deer

and other game to be had for the shooting. One had only to cast a line in the streams to bring up a fish. Honey was rich in the trees and wild plums and crabapples abounded. Above were the wild turkeys and the prairie chickens with their continual booming. Those same railroads which were then so feared and hated were soon to carry many a freight car of the latter to Eastern markets, where they were considered a delicacy. A good hunter, who could bring home two hundred of them in a day in his wagon, was considered a public benefactor, since he helped exterminate the pests that ate the corn and grain.

Geoffrey Gresley had gambled well. His land lay in the midst of all this earthly paradise. The farm was a few miles from Iowa City with the high bluffs of the Cedar River as its northern boundary. It was hill and valley, timber and meadow. By comparison, Squire Ash's stony acres seemed sparse and barren.

All this and more David wrote eagerly to Elizabeth. He told her of the house on the Gresley land and how it was bigger and better built than most houses in this new country; of the farmer tenant with whom he was staying, and his wife who smoked a pipe; of the new barn they were soon to raise. He wrote also a charming little letter to Hallie and Jimmy, in which he described the walnuts and hickory nuts and hazel nuts he wished they were there to gather, and the black-eyed Susans and wild asters and goldenrod and sumac they might pick in a bouquet for their mother.

Then he did not write at all.

The days passed. No letter came. Elizabeth went about her father's house tight-lipped and fearful-eyed. Stories

she had heard of Indian massacres came back to her. Finally she determined to write to Mr. Gresley in Ottawa to ask him what he knew of David. The day her letter was written there was word at last from the West. There had been no Indians, but there had been a falling timber from the new barn which had broken David's leg. He wrote that he was in bed but getting along well. She was not to worry.

The days dragged into weeks and weeks into months. Elizabeth wrote David demanding the truth about his condition. His reply gave her the facts which he could hide no longer. The doctor who had been brought to set his leg had bungled. The bone had not been set properly. Another doctor was called who broke the bone again and reset it. David's letter reached Elizabeth just before Christmas. By Christmas night she had made up her mind.

In weather that was twenty degrees below zero and amid all the uncertainties of westward travel of the fifties, Elizabeth Cartwright Ash started on her thousand-mile journey into an unknown country. "Mother," she had said, "I'm going west to David. He needs me. I'll leave Hallie with you, but I'm going to take Jimmy."

Arguments and pleas to her were of no avail. "I cannot leave David in that uncivilized country to be cared for by a woman who smokes a pipe," she made her final answer. "No wonder he doesn't get well." Mrs. Cartwright continued to beg her at least to leave Jimmy. "No," answered Elizabeth, "I'll be all right if I take Jimmy. He'll—" She did not finish the sentence. She did not know herself that what she felt was that Jimmy, not yet

four, was already a bulwark to her.

"And I was right about taking Jimmy," she wrote her mother later. "I would have frozen to death, I do indeed believe, in the train had it not been for the warmth of his little body which I hugged to me. As for David, if I had not come when I did, he says he would have been by now lying six feet under the snows of this wild land. He had lost heart and hope, although I must say Mrs. Smucker was a good nurse to him in spite of her disgusting pipe. Fortunately, Mr. Smucker was in Iowa City doing his trading the day I arrived, as I learned from the station agent who found him for me. I rode out to the farm with him and from the look on David's face when he saw me, you might have thought I had come straight from another world. He is mending rapidly now, although the doctor says he will always be lame. . . ."

As Elizabeth wrote, her unexpected arrival had indeed saved David's life. Her strength of spirit flowed into him and before many weeks he was on his feet and walking. It was early in February that he broached to her a subject on which he had been pondering secretly for some time; he wished to stay in the West and farm. Elizabeth listened in silence, with dread and fear in her heart.

"The Smuckers are leaving and I know Mr. Gresley would be only too glad to rent this place to me," David went on, "but I will not rent land from any man, not even Geoffrey Gresley. There is a much smaller place for sale four miles east that is to be had cheap. I have money enough saved to pay for it and we can start on our own." He looked at little Jimmy. He, too, thought of a landed patrimony for his son.

With the coming of early spring David bought "the Whitlaw place," and he and Elizabeth and Jimmy moved into its boxlike house which stood mercilessly exposed high on the hill. Hallie traveled west in the care of a distant cousin and his wife from Albany who had bought land a hundred miles beyond. Elizabeth went about the business of taking care of her reunited family with tightened lips and an unsmiling mouth. The ugly little two-story house with its single room below and similar one above and lean-to kitchen at the back was bad enough in the pleasant warmth of spring days. What, she wondered, would it be like when the prairies were deep with snow and the winter winds raged over the hilltop and wolves howled in the woods near by?

It was the beginning of the most unhappy period of Elizabeth's whole life. She suffered in silence and alone. David was busy with his farm work. Both Hallie and Jimmy were enjoying themselves as never before. They unearthed the secrets of the prairie and made them their own. Small as he was, Jimmy learned to swim and fish, to snare gophers and hunt prairie chickens' nests. He and Hallie hunted anemones in the lingering snow and later brought home bouquets of Dutchman's-breeches and bird's-foot violets and yellow cowslips and jack-in-the-pulpits to their mother, who wanted instead lilac bushes by the door and peonies in the garden, and geraniums for the window in the winter.

To Elizabeth Ash the prairie held no joy or beauty. She knew that deadly snakes slithered in the tall, gracefully waving grasses and among the bright flowers, and sometimes even to the very doorstep of the house itself.

"I never feel safe from them unless I'm upstairs," she told David in one of her rare outbursts. "At least, they can't get to the second story."

Then one spring day, as she stood at the window in the upper room where a curtain in the center served to make a separate chamber for the children, a dreadful sight met her eyes. Under the eaves was a nest filled with tiny robins which the whole family had been solicitously watching. Now a slimy thing wriggled along the eaves to the nest. Fascinated, Elizabeth watched it. Then she ran down the stairs blindly, screaming. Never again did she have an unbroken night's rest in the house on the hill.

Not even the occasional Sunday services held at the crossroads church by a traveling elder brought her comfort. As befitting her station as Mrs. David Ash and out of due respect to her heavenly Maker, she dressed herself for these occasions, as a matter of course, in her best. The other women in the congregation wore their customary sunbonnets, and Mrs. Ash was deemed "stuck-up." Elizabeth should have been forewarned by the fate of a certain local candidate for Congress who met his defeat at the polls because it was whispered he slept in a night-shirt instead of the shirt which he wore during the day. And wasn't a certain mayor of the world's greatest city defeated for re-election three-quarters of a century later because common talk was that the Vanderbilts called him Jack?

Religion meant much to Elizabeth, however, and she continued to attend church—and to wear her plume-trimmed bonnet—whenever Elder Lester made his rounds. It became understood that after the services the

lank, long-haired Elder would go home with the Ashes for Sunday dinner. It was one breathlessly hot summer day in the middle of July that he surprised them as soon as they arrived home by asking if there were any loose rocks around "handy." "I don't like the look of it and I don't like the feel," he explained. "I think we're going to have a big blow. I want to weigh my buggy down with some heavy stones or something."

"Say," he added suddenly with another look westward, "you folks don't happen to have a cyclone cellar, do you?"

He had barely finished his question when a big whirling funnel pendent from a mass of black cloud bore down over the land from the southwest. It was neither a big blow nor a cyclone, but a tornado bringing in its wake such devastation as only those who have seen can believe possible. The little group huddled in terror within the flimsy house, with Elder Lester on his knees in prayer. Then as quickly as it had come it had gone, and by some miracle they realized they and their possessions had remained untouched.

In the clear, cool air which followed the storm, David and Elder Lester mounted horses and went among the shattered and uprooted trees to see how their neighbors had fared. The Gresley place, too, had been unharmed, but at the farm beyond they found no trace of buildings nor of those who lived there. Smucker, who was also abroad to see the damage, told them he had heard that the little hamlet of St. Mary's down on the river had been completely wiped out. At the next farm they found the owners alive and unhurt, but the house had been lifted

in the air and turned entirely around before being set back on its foundations, so that the back door now faced the road. Fred Bargelt, who had joined the Elder and David and Smucker by this time, said the only loss in their family had been Granny Bargelt's cap, which was found, with her initials embroidered on it in Turkey red, three weeks later and fifty miles away in a tree near Clinton. At Clif Brandon's there was no damage except to the ten-year-old son who had been thrown against a wire fence in the north field and temporarily shocked by a bolt of lightning which burned the laces from his shoes. They did not know then that for the following fifteen years young Brandon would see double everything which encountered his vision.

The tornado gave Elizabeth still another cause for fear.

The year wore on. A dapper bachelor named James Buchanan lived far away in the White House and listened to music in the evenings, while the newspapers talked of the Fugitive Slave Law which could not be enforced and the possible annexation of Cuba and the fist fights in Congress. In August a bank called the Ohio Life Insurance Company closed its doors in Cincinnati and the New York banks suspended specie payments. Panic spread over the land. David Ash whistled "Turkey in the Straw" no longer as he went about the work of his farm.

The lights were very bright at a brilliant ball in Washington where Mrs. Henry Clay was dazzling in canary satin and point lace. "The refreshment tables were loaded with a wealth of delicious viands." When the guests partook after the dancing, the talk was of Dion Boucicault's new play and of how delightful was Stephen

Foster's latest song. And was it true that Mr. Barnum was really bankrupt? It did not seem possible after he had introduced to the world all those amazing and instructive exhibits. The lady in the headdress of red carnations murmured that she had heard dear Mr. Emerson lecture when she was in Boston last week, and that she had actually met Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell. It was such a privilege to know these great intellectuals.

"Oh, yes, such deep minds," purred her friend in white and gold brocade trimmed with seed pearls, "but don't you adore Susan Warner? And then there is our Fanny Fern. I always say that there is an author who has probed the heart's depths."

"A fine-looking woman, too," her escort contributed. "I've seen her at my brother's house. She's not beautiful, and yet she's one you turn to look at twice with her lovely light-brown hair and big blue eyes. And she has the manners of a queen."

"Yes, and Jove, what a charming ankle and what a voluptuous bust!" another male guest added sotto voce. "If Fanny wrote as well as she looks, I'd read her, too."

Over all the candles continued to burn brightly far into the night.

The Ashes sat in the uncertain light of the homemade candles Elizabeth had made. Making those candles had not been easy work. Elizabeth looked at the candles with something very close to hatred as she knitted silently in their wavering light.

"We must get away. We must get away." She cried the words wildly to herself over and over.

Hallie opened her "keepsake" brought from the East,

and for the tenth time read the sad story of Minna Mor-daunt, the squire's secret sweetheart, who "felt she was forsaken; and she left her father's cottage one long autumn night, and managed her escape and her concealment with so much secrecy that no one knew her motive; nor any, save her mother, her dishonour."

"We must get away. We must get away."

David turned a page of his copy of the *Eclectic Magazine* with a sigh.

"We must get away. We must get away."

Who was it said that every man is heir to an empire and has fallen into a pit? The pit on an Iowa farm in the year of 1857 could be very deep indeed.

"We must get away. We must get away."

It was 1858, and winter, which the Ashes learned was not a season in this new country but an industry which kept them constantly occupied in keeping themselves warm. Food was scarce and prices soared. Wives sifted the bran for the cows and from its kernels and germs made bread, which, in their eyes, brought them to the level of the animals. Only Elizabeth realized the merits of the new bread. "I believe it's much better for the children," she said, "I'm going to give it to them always." The other women looked at her in amazement and went home to tell their families that Mrs. Ash was so proud she pretended to make bran bread because she thought it was healthy.

It was Mrs. Smucker who provided the one bright spot in all that long winter of endless drifts and cold, pitiless stars and howling winds and wolves. Undaunted by the

elements, she rode to the Ashes one December day with a bundle of papers which she had been saving over a period of months. They were copies of the *New York Ledger*, the *New York Weekly*, and the *Saturday Night*. For many a family of the fifties these magazines provided the same escape from reality that motion pictures provide today. *Wedded Yet No Wife* afforded as many thrills as a Taylor or a Gable. Robbery, royalty, adventure and arson, all "to be continued in our next," came straight into the little ugly house on the hill and made magic for its inmates. Elizabeth frowned on the lurid literature read so avidly by both David and Hallie, but Bishop Hall's sermon on page one of the *Ledger* made her more tolerant than she would have been otherwise.

It was not until over a year and a half later that any real change broke the routine of life in the Ash household. During the summer of 1859, while John Brown and his followers lived in an abandoned Maryland farmhouse and learned the terrain of the surrounding country, Elizabeth Ash worked feverishly against the coming of her third child.

"Come into the house and see what Dr. Holmes brought you," Hallie called to Jimmy one day in early autumn only a few weeks before an enginehouse was besieged and the nation reverberated with the news of Harpers Ferry.

"I know! I bet it's a punkun," Jimmy cried, running.

"And perhaps he was right at that," was Victoria's later comment. "Perhaps that's all I am—just a 'punkun.' "

David and Elizabeth Ash had known many places and distant and different backgrounds. Hallie could remem-

ber vividly an earlier, easier life in which was security and even luxury; had she not been with Squire Ash to Saratoga to a big hotel which boasted twenty-two acres of flowered carpet, and had she not seen a fabulous Southerner there lay down a five-dollar gold piece in payment for a drink from High Rock Spring? Even Jimmy could recall another and more comfortable, if less exciting, existence in an older, ordered world.

Only Victoria knew nothing beyond the hills and valleys and prairies of the Middle West. It would have been impossible for her to have had any other than a frontier psychology, born of new things in a young land.

It was the winter following Victoria's birth that David Ash resolved to leave the farm. "You're right, Elizabeth," he confessed. "You're always right." "Which doesn't endear me to anyone," his wife retorted drily. "But I am so glad, David. There are no words to tell you how glad I am. I don't care what you do or where we go as long as we leave here and there are schools for the children."

Towns have personalities quite as individual as persons. In the few short years of their existence, those which had come into being within a small radius of the Ash farm differed from each other radically. David told Elizabeth that he still believed in the new country and wished to stay there, but which town to choose for a home was a question. The obvious choice seemed Iowa City, which was, however, no longer the state capital. Two years before, in the intense cold of the winter of '57-'58, the state's property had been transferred to Des Moines, with ten yoke of oxen dragging the almost empty safe of the

treasury department over the snow. The old capitol building, erected in 1840, had been turned over as the permanent seat of the State University.

"Or there is Brandsville or Granton or Madrid or Hillview or Cedar Rapids," David named as possible choices.

Elizabeth rejected Madrid at once, although she conceded its merits. How the town had been so christened was a mystery, since it was composed almost entirely of solid, stolid Germans known as Pennsylvania Dutch who brought with them all the thrift and traditions of their ancestors. One smiled at them and their ways behind their backs, but not to their faces; and always one respected them and envied them their prosperity. Brandsville, Elizabeth and David both agreed, was "tough" and "fast." Granton, the county seat of Oak County, to the east of Linn, was also condemned as "fast," although it was conceded that its fastness had a certain sophistication and urbanity which Brandsville did not possess. From the first, Hillview had been the Ashes' unspoken choice. The college, which had come into being there in 1852, was the determining factor in their minds. It was a denominational or church school, and David and Elizabeth agreed with Governor Grimes who believed that these should be encouraged rather than state institutions of general learning. Elizabeth particularly felt that the religious atmosphere of Crollon, the Hillview college, would be beneficial for the children.

Elder Broden, the founder of Crollon, had been a dreamer and a doer, with no small bit of showman and shrewd storekeeper thrown in to make an ideal combination for accomplishment. Of frame he was large and of

speech rugged, with something of the fanatic in his burning deep-set eyes. Legend has it that as an itinerant pioneer riding over the countryside on horseback, he came upon the thickly wooded knoll a hundred feet above the valley and, looking over forest and prairie stretching in all directions for ten or twelve miles, he had a revelation which showed him that this was to be the site of a future school; whereupon, with his usual promptness, the Elder dismounted from his horse and in a clump of hazel knelt and dedicated both the hilltop and himself to the founding here of a Christian college.

Prayer was all very well, but the pioneer circuit rider knew that it must be followed by publicity. Without mails or telegraph or railroads, he put on a ballyhoo which would have been the envy of the ace of modern press agents. As his own public relations counsel, he projected a Fourth of July celebration at Hillview in 1852 which brought folk from as far south as Burlington, eighty miles across country, and as far north as Dubuque, sixty miles away. The chief entertainment of the day was an address on education by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Thus the project of launching the college was accomplished. The school, with a single building, opened its doors in the autumn of 1853.

For this, Elder Broden must have money, but he was already experienced in ways and means by which this might be obtained. He had previously built a church in Iowa City by the ingenious expedient of begging a collection of miscellaneous articles in the East and having them shipped to Iowa City, where he set up a general store and sold his wares. With the proceeds he built his

church. He employed similar methods in getting funds for his college. When a man told him he could not give him money for the new school, the canny Elder would ask for his watch instead, or anything else of value on which his eyes might light. On one occasion, when he was so ill that he thought his God was going to call him to his heavenly home, he hastily summoned a lawyer in order that a list might be drawn up showing which of the fowls and farm implements in his barnyard were his own and which belonged to the college. Not even for his own family would Elder Broden have had Crollon be cheated of a single pullet.

Another determining factor in favor of Hillview in the mind of Robin Cartwright's daughter was the strong prohibition character of the town. In 1850, three years after it had been laid out one warm September day with a tape and square by a carpenter named Richard Harbert, a group of citizens pledged themselves that "we will use our influence and means to suppress the introduction and sale of all intoxicating liquors, peacefully if we can, forcibly if we must, and we pledge ourselves to mutually bear any expense that may be incurred in suppressing the same." One Harvey Jewett, whose saloon had been the first business of the town, wisely changed his building into a dry goods emporium.

By 1859, when the Ashes considered moving to Hillview, the town had already a population of 760 people, and thought of itself as a well-established community. As early as 1850 it had its first church and its first grave, to be followed the next year by its first hotel, of two and a half stories, and a livery barn which boasted two sway-backed

horses and one rickety buggy. That same year it had also its first mystery, that of a stranger and his heartless son. "Poor fellow, I wonder if he had the cholera," David commented when he was told of the sick man left at the Metcalfes' by a son who said he would return soon, but who never came back. That night the man began to mutter strangely and finally the neighbors were so frightened they moved to another part of town. The Metcalfes stayed with him in fear and trembling, however, and when he died a few days later, buried him in the middle of the night. The man's identity was never known.

Various small industries were soon established in the town. There was a quarry, a brickyard, a sorghum mill, a sawmill, a flour mill. But the town's pride was its carriage and wagon shop where vehicles of all descriptions were made by the sons of the Ault family. Buggies and bobsleds and sleighs and farm wagons were turned out by Jim and Joe and Frank. Jim, the youngest, who did the woodwork, boasted truthfully that the three sets of wagon wheels he turned out weekly could not be equaled anywhere in the state. Joe's ironwork was equally excellent, and Frank, the artist of the family, turned out very creditable landscapes on wagon boxes. Near the Ault shop on Main Street was the Butler furniture "factory," some of whose Victorian walnut parlor sets have of recent years been rescued from the ignominy to which they were long relegated and are now gracing the living rooms of the Lions and the Country Club set. Sam Butler's sister, Mattie, had a "factory" also, with hoop skirts as its output. In a shed on one of the side streets back of his house Fred Fitts made crocks and other pieces of earthenware. Bed-

springs were manufactured when there was a demand for them by Bill Fisher in the back room of his store.

In spite of the panic of '57 from which the country was just emerging and the general unsettled state of the nation due to the constant strife between the North and the South, Hillview was a self-contained and thriving town. David and Elizabeth felt they had decided wisely.

"The Whitlaw place," now known as "the Ash place," was turned over to renters—who bought it the following year—in the early spring and David and Elizabeth and the three children came to town to live. There was no bridge over the Cedar at that time and they and their possessions crossed at a point called Ivanhoe on a flat-bottomed raft made of timbers covered with heavy planking surrounded by a railing so none would fall into the water. The raft was managed by a steel cable running between two heavy posts planted on each side of the river, with a pulley running along the cable and two steel cables running from the pulley to the flatboat to keep it from floating downstream. Two men pushed the raft back and forth with poles.

Without consulting Elizabeth, David had purchased for their proposed home a lot which was now a cornfield but which lay along the hilltop and directly facing the college campus. It had seemed to him one of the choicest vacant lots in town, and when he told Elizabeth of his purchase she was delighted. Its proximity to the college seemed significant and symbolical. At last she was to have for herself and her family those "treasures of the mind" which Robin had told her mattered so much in life.

David proposed to build a frame house of comfortable proportions and simple lines. Elizabeth planned that it should be painted white with green shutters. Perhaps, she had often thought, the dreadful little house on the hill would have seemed more endurable to her if only it had had the shutters of Eastern houses to mitigate its bare uncompromising ugliness. "Yes, and we will have inside blinds in the parlor, too," David promised. "It will be a double parlor with sliding doors between the two rooms and all the windows downstairs will reach to the floor." "And can we have a bow window in the dining room?" Elizabeth asked eagerly. David assured her that by all means there would be a bow window facing east in the dining room.

Hallie alone seemed to take no interest in plans for the house the family were going to build on the hill. She went around in a dream while she helped Elizabeth with domestic tasks in the small frame cottage on the edge of town which David had rented for a temporary home.

"Be careful, Hallie—you'll drop that dish," her mother admonished. "I do declare, I don't know what to do with you. What's the matter, anyway?"

"They say he is the handsomest young man with blue eyes and light hair and the most beautiful manners," was her older daughter's surprising reply.

"Who?" asked Elizabeth in amazement.

"The Prince of Wales," Hallie said dreamily. "I've read everything there is about him in the newspaper. They're going to give a grand ball for him in New York at the Academy of Music on the twelfth of October. It's

going to be opened by a quadrille with Governor and Mrs. Morgan and Mr. Bancroft, the historian, and his wife and a lot of other society people. I wish I could go. I'd—I'd like to dance with the Prince."

For a moment words failed Elizabeth. "To think that I should have such a daughter," she sighed at last. "Your head has nothing in it but romantic, nonsensical dreams. I don't know what's going to become of you."

"Fernando Wood, the mayor of New York, says it is going to be the finest ball ever given in the city," Hallie went on. "I do wish I could go, ma. Oh, indeed I do!"

Fernando Wood was right. Not even a near-catastrophe could mar its glory. So great was the rush when the quadrille was to begin that the center of the stage gave way. Luckily no one was injured, and the carpenters repaired the damage quickly while old Isaac Brown, the sexton of Grace Church, supervised the work and begged them to make haste. After the dancing, supper was served in the supper room where liveried servants stood elbow to elbow behind the chairs. The royal party was seated on a dais at one end. Guests were admitted in groups of fifty, and woe betide anyone who tried to slip in out of turn. Prominent citizens kept strict guard at each entrance, and even Ward McAllister was sternly put in his place by John Jacob Astor when he tried to enter before his appointed time.

"David, whatever am I going to do to make Hallie stop reading all these things in the paper about the Prince?" Elizabeth asked finally in despair.

"Let her alone, my dear," her husband answered. "It won't do her any harm."

"I hope not," her mother answered grimly. "She's dreaming herself into a regular Cinderella role."

Elizabeth would have been amazed indeed if told that her own granddaughter would one day insult the whole British Empire by asking the Prince's grandson if he had any intention of marrying an American girl. Both she and the British Empire would have been even more surprised could they have known that a few years later this would be precisely what Edward Windsor did. Could Elizabeth have looked into the future, however, she would have said loyally and truthfully:

"That person from Baltimore couldn't hold a candle to Hallie!"

Victoria was too young, of course, to know about Hallie's prince, although her first conscious memory was of an event which took place in the little house on the edge of town near the big pine grove. While the house was not isolated, there were no immediate neighbors, and for that reason Elizabeth usually took the children with her if she went to the stores of the village. One autumn day, however, when Victoria was a little over two years old, she and Jimmy were left alone while Hallie was at school and their mother hurried to a woman with a new baby on the other side of town.

Victoria was playing by the window with her doll when suddenly she gave a startled cry which attracted Jimmy's attention. When he came to the window, he was even more startled than the baby sister, for he remembered vividly stories of the dreadful massacre of Spirit Lake in '57.

Five Indians were coming from the direction of the

pine grove. They headed straight for the house.

Indians were rarely seen in the vicinity, although some of the Sacs and Foxes had returned some years before from Kansas where they had gone in 1846. Wikiups were seen here and there along the Iowa River and the Cedar. The red men were for the most part peaceful and harmless and often even befriended the settlers, although there persisted vague rumors of their attempted kidnapings of white children.

Jimmy pulled Victoria from the window without ceremony. "Quick, under here. Don't you make one sound," he commanded his sister, as he dragged and pushed her under a daybed standing against the wall. It was a charming piece of furniture, as the friends of Victoria's daughter often remarked many years later, with gracefully curving ends of walnut whose shape recalled the earlier influence of Phyfe. Jimmy was, however, only concerned at the moment with its usefulness and the fact that it had a flowered chintz cover whose valance reached to the floor. "Not one peep," he whispered, as the five silent and very dirty red men came up the front steps.

Jimmy had acted none too soon. Without a knock, the Indians tried the door, found it unlocked and came into the small hallway and on into the room where the children were. To Jimmy they said nothing, nor to each other, but merely went about examining various objects with curiosity. Poll, the parrot which David had bought from a peddler for Hallie the year before, aroused their especial interest, and one by one they picked the feathers from its tail, while Jimmy stood by speechless and burning with indignation. Then they went back into the hall-

way and started for the door on the opposite side of the house. Jimmy was too quick for them. Before they reached it, he was there ahead of them, with his small hand grasping the knob firmly. "No," he said, "no." It was the first word spoken since the Indians had entered the house.

The boy had endured the uninvited entry of his home and the desecration of Hallie's parrot—the only one in town—but he could not countenance the presence of these dirty savages within the sacred precincts of the Sunday parlor which was back of that closed door. With its new organ and marble-topped table on which lay the big black and gold Bible and Robin Cartwright's *Book of Beauty*, it was too fine a room for even the family to enter on six days of the week. Come what might, he resolved that no redskin should ever cross that threshold.

Psychiatrists might theorize on why it was that five tall men of a savage and relentless race paused and turned back before a freckle-faced red-haired boy of eight whose knees shook beneath him while his voice was loud and firm. Jimmy's mother thought of it and pondered long afterward as newspapers lay in her lap telling of other things an older Jimmy had made men do or not do against their will; but because Jimmy was always her favorite child, she did not wonder why it was that a two-year-old baby girl lay on the floor behind the flowered valance and whimpered never once in all her terror.

"Good girl!" Jimmy praised a disheveled Victoria when he pulled her out as the Indians made their silent way back to the pine grove. Those words were reward enough for the little sister. All her life long Jimmy's

"good girl" meant more to her than any other praise, however fulsome.

It was while the Ashes still lived by the pine grove on the edge of town that an even more momentous event than the visit of the Indians took place. One April day while Elizabeth cut out a new dress of delaine for Hallie, Fort Sumter was fired on in Charleston harbor.

Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers for nine months, and a Confederate cabinet burst into laughter when a telegram announced the news to them.

Below Mason and Dixon's line on the big plantations wide-skirted belles and gray-garbed officers danced to the light of crystal chandeliers suspended from twenty-five-foot ceilings, and gaily promised they would dance again together within three months. On lacy iron galleries and within sheltered magnolia-scented courtyards of old New Orleans lovers smiled farewell while a mockingbird made springtime in a live oak near by. Paddle boats plied bustlingly up and down the river as the workmen at Longwood on the lower Mississippi eagerly threw down their tools and went to war. They did not return. Longwood was the last of the great feudal mansions of the cotton barons. It was never finished. Today it still stands as the workmen left it in '61, a vast beautiful decaying ruin from whose tall chimneys smoke has never risen.

The gray-garbed men who marched to war on that April day so long ago went with the Rebel yell in their throats and the song of "Dixie" on their lips. For months the strains of "Dixie" had resounded through the Southland. Its fame had spread from New Orleans, where it

had been sung at Mardi Gras, to the levees along the river, to the cane and cotton fields, to the darky cabins and the masters' mansions.

There was more than a touch of irony in the fact that "Dixie" became the anthem of the South. It had been written and first sung in New York. Its author was Daniel Decatur Emmett, the father of black-face minstrelsy. In September, 1859, he was with Bryant Brothers Minstrels which was playing in Mechanics Hall at Broadway and Park Place. Jerry Bryant had decided that the closing number of the show was too weak, so he commissioned Emmett to write a rousing song. This was Saturday, September 17. The next day, Sunday, Emmett labored over "Dixie" in his hotel room in Barclay Street. It was raining in torrents. Suddenly through the window he caught sight of a Negro singing in the downpour. In a flash "I wish I was in Dixie" came to Emmett. Before he went to bed that night words and music were complete. Twenty curtain calls the next night proved that New York liked the song. Within a week it was whistled all over the city by teamsters, clerks, newsboys. By Christmas "Dixie" was in sheet form. The South did not hear the song, however, until 1861.

After the Confederacy adopted it as its anthem, New York heard "Dixie" no more. From 1861 to 1865 the song was forbidden in the city. Northern bands who tried to play it were hissed and even stoned. Eventually "Dixie" was no longer to be found in the libraries of orchestras and bands. It was not heard in the North again until the late seventies.

Emmett made a fortune from his music, and he spent

it. Once he was rescued from playing a violin in one of the dives of New Orleans. Later friends found him chopping wood for a living in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. In his last years he was cared for by the Actors Fund of America. He had written many songs during his eighty-nine years of life, but none had the lasting popularity of "Dixie."

It was David who first told the news of Fort Sumter in Hillview. There was no telegraph beyond Davenport at that time, but David, who had ridden across country to Iowa City on business, brought back the story of how a messenger had carried the news there. He reported that Iowa City was plastered with hastily struck-off posters calling citizens to arms, with an especial appeal to enlistment for those who had served formerly in foreign armies.

David had voted for Lincoln, although he had not heard any of his campaign speeches. Lincoln made but two speeches in Iowa, one in Council Bluffs and the other in Burlington. When he spoke in the latter city, Grimes Hall was full. He was well received although with no overwhelming enthusiasm. People accepted him without fanfare, just as he had arrived without fanfare. He had brought with him only a newspaper-wrapped package which he gave the hotel clerk with admonishment to take care of it, since it contained his "boiled shirt." Iowa had never been a stronghold of the Abolitionists. Sentiment was divided on the question of slavery.

This was all changed now. The Union must be saved at any cost. By the eighth of May the first Iowa regiment was filled. To keep peace among a people crying for war,

Governor Kirkwood created without the authority of the War Department a second regiment, followed by a third and still later a fourth. Men sang "The Mocking Bird" and bands played "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Every Northern soldier knew victory would be theirs because God was on the side of right. The South knew also that they would be victorious. God was on their side too, since they were right. Neither remembered Voltaire's warning that God was on the side of the strongest battalions. Neither had learned yet what Sherman meant when he said war was hell. Phil Sheridan's Rienzi did not realize that Winchester was many more than twenty miles away. Robert E. Lee's Traveler did not know how long and hard was the road of defeat that led to Appomattox.

In '61 all men were off to victory even if many a soldier carried an outmoded musket stamped U.S.A. 1829, a relic of the Black Hawk War.

If regulation uniforms were not available, women made them according to their fancy. Red seemed to them a cheerful color, so often they trimmed them with red stripes and added red cockades. No one reminded them that red was also the color of blood and very bright, and would make an admirable target for the enemy.

In Hillview it was as elsewhere. All were wild to go, from John Q. Rutledge, in his fine brick house with its satin damask draperies and heavy silverware on Depot Street, to Eben Richards, whose only worldly monument is today the cross he made for his name on the day of his enlistment. Joe White, the druggist, was going, and Dr. Amos Styles, the physician; Farry, the carpenter; McCabe, the blacksmith; Rowe, the painter, and scores of others

from the little town.

Four companies were organized in Hillview. No small percentage of these was recruited from the students at Crollon, although many of the college boys returned home to join other companies in various parts of the state. For months the students had been aroused over the questions of secession and slavery. Boys and girls alike had taken part in numerous mock congresses and debates. Orations and poems on these subjects had been the order of the day.

Now had come the time for youth to prove its mettle. Ovid and Euclid were forgotten when fife and drum struck up the new song "We'll Rally Round the Flag, Boys." Let each hasten to put on the armor of God and the uniform of the United States Army! It was splendid, too, to be a man and no longer a boy and to try to grow a beard! When the college opened for the year of '62-'63, there were only eleven boys left at Crollon, and two of these were cripples. Nearly two hundred had gone from the school into the army.

Every afternoon now Elizabeth gathered with the other town women to scrape lint and roll bandages. In each spare moment Hallie's clever fingers knitted socks.

"Elizabeth, I have to go," David said one night when he came home from the new house, which was almost completed. "I've thought it all over. There isn't anything else for a decent man to do."

"But you have the contract for building the new church," Elizabeth protested.

"God has other business more important now than building the new church," David replied. Then he re-

peated: "I have to go."

Perhaps God wanted the new church, after all, for David was left at home to build it; the recruiting officers refused him because of his lameness.

Everywhere there was talk of war, but war had not yet come. It was not until July that Congressmen and others, some in carriages with luncheons of cold fowl and champagne, went out from Washington to watch the Union boys with flowers in their gun barrels win their first battle. By midafternoon, with no more flowers anywhere, the Northern army was in a panic of retreat along the thirty-five miles of road leading back to the Capital. The first battle of Bull Run had been fought and lost. And in August word came to Hillview that the town's first hero, snub-nosed little Jack Storbes, had fallen at Wilson's Creek. Victoria only knew that August was the month they moved into the new house on the hill opposite the college with its two imposing brick buildings and fine board fence surrounding the campus.

Not for long, however, did the little girl remain in her own world of childhood untouched by war. No longer would Jimmy let her join in his games. He was with the other boys of the town charging with the infantry or in the saddle on a dashing cavalry horse. At night around the supper table strange names of new places that were not Iowa City nor Cedar Rapids nor Madrid nor any of the other neighboring towns began to penetrate Victoria's consciousness: Antietam, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Libby Prison—oh, sinister-sounding name!

One day David received a letter from his younger

brother, John, who was with Ellsworth's Avengers, 144th New York Volunteer Infantry; a letter now yellow with age but with the writing still bold and black. It does not contain vivid accounts of battle nor recount daring acts of bravery. It is simple, like the thousands of others written by boys in blue during the long four years. John wrote:

Feb. 21st, '63.  
Camp near Falmouth, Va.

Dear Brother,

I rec'd your kind and welcome letter last night and was glad to her that you were well. My health is rather poor but better now than it has been for some time but it is doubtful if I ever get entirely over my disease, "chronic diarrhea." It has troubled me more or less for 10 months and I have been to the Hospital twice, once at Philadelphia and once at Baltimore. Our Reg't has been in the field nearly a year and a half. We have seen a great many hard times and had but few easy ones. I have been in four battles and came out without a scratch. I was in the battles of Hanover, Gaines' Hill, Malvern and Fredericksburg, and I feel thankful that God has spared my life thus far. I have not been home since I enlisted over a year and a half ago.

Pa has bought another place about two miles north of Bald Mountain for the mill privilege, and has built a small grist mill there. James is still on the farm and Henry still owns the "Old Mill." They were all well the last I heard from Home.

You wished to know how I fared and when I rec'd my pay. Well, David, it is now nearly 10 months since I was paid. We get enough to eat the most of the time but I have seen the time that I would have given a Month's Pay for a good meal of victuals, but such is not often the case.

And now I must close as it is nearly time for Drill. Give my love to all, David, and write soon to your Brother

J. Ash.

By the twenty-second of July, John Ash was dead, although it had taken him a long time to die; Captain Richard Ash's descendants sometimes die hard. A hundred and sixty-three thousand men had met in deadly battle at an obscure place called Gettysburg, and John was one of the 53,000 who fell. When the color-bearer of his regiment was killed, he seized the colors and was wounded himself on the second day of the battle. His country sent his body home and there was a new grave in the quiet country cemetery by the Old Mill under the mountainside.

After another war in another century Victoria walked through the streets of Hillview ringing an old-fashioned dinner bell. It was Armistice Day, 1918. "Eliza Spangler went through the streets with her bell after they had the news of the battle of Gettysburg," Victoria explained. "I remember it as though it were yesterday."

Victoria's fourth birthday in September came in a weary war-torn world. It seemed to the child that there had never been any existence save one in which there was talk only of battle and sudden death. Gone long since was glamour and the first high heartbeats of patriotism. The year 1863 saw not only a divided country but a divided North. The secret order of disloyalists known as the Knights of the Golden Circle was estimated by Governor Kirkwood as numbering 42,000 in Iowa alone. Copperheads and butternut pins were everywhere. In afteryears tradition-proud Crollon College presented in gay pageant its grim Commencement when the exercises in the peaceful campus grove were broken up by two girls who clawed each other and tore their crinolines over a

butternut pin, and Bob North was cuffed and kicked by loyal boys until he shouted "Hurrah for the Union!"

"What could you expect of the Norths, anyway," was Victoria's rhetorical question fifty years later when Bob North's son was caught in minor political chicanery. "His family were Copperheads during the war." Memory can be very long.

It was in the autumn of '63 that Victoria heard for the first time one of the most dreaded words in any language and in the land; it was "mortgage." There was to be a mortgage put on the fine farm just across from the new depot which her father had bought when he had sold his other farm across the river, and which he rented on shares. Victoria did not understand what a mortgage was, except that it was disgraceful and had something to do with the new church which David had been building. "I have contracted for the brick and other materials for the church," he told the family at the supper table, "and I have to pay for them and to pay my workmen. But the church people can't pay me now as they agreed, so there is nothing to do but get a mortgage on the farm if I can."

There was a long silence.

"It's the first time any Ash ever had a mortgage on his land," he said slowly. "Please God it will be the last. A mortgage is a cancer that eats you until you die."

Victoria learned another new word also that year, "draft." The wheel had turned and the conscripts were going. Sam Bentley, the betrothed of Emma Hadyn who lived across the street, had been called. Sam had tried twice to enlist previously and had been rejected both times on account of a weak chest. Now there was no ques-

tion about his acceptance. Times were too desperate. As Emma's friend, Hallie felt the pangs of separation and the agony of uncertainty vicariously. Hallie would sit at the organ and play and pump while the clear young voices of the two girls would sing of the true love who was a soldier who had been taken to the arms of Abraham. Unlike the young man of the song, Sam had wanted to go desperately. When Emma had said good-bye to him at the depot, his eyes had blazed with the light of stars and his cheeks, always a little flushed, were warm with a deceptive ruddiness of health. Before another year he had gone to the arms of an Abraham even more inexorable than the gaunt-faced, loose-limbed man in the White House.

No incident of the whole Civil War stood out in Victoria's mind in afteryears as vividly as the funeral of Major John Q. Rutledge, the young lawyer, whom they brought back from Winchester to the brick house on Depot Street where he had lived with lovely golden-haired Lorena Rutledge, his wife, and their two little girls. Victoria had seen the family at church and heard Hallie admire his dark, curly hair with its wayward lock over the forehead. She had often met Lorena with little Matie and Sophronia when she was with her mother in the village, and resolved that when she grew up she, too, would have a yellow chip bonnet faced with blue and trimmed with tiny rosebuds and wear a pale-gray silk dress with lace at the elbows like Mrs. Rutledge's.

There was neither lovely Lorena nor little Matie nor little Sophronia to greet young John Rutledge when they carried his casket into his parlor with its rose damask

curtains and carved rosewood furniture. Lorena had died the week before of typhoid, in the arms of her brothers, the carriage makers, in the Ault house on Main Street, and Matie and Sophronia had followed her in two days with diphtheria. Lorena had never known of the death of her husband, nor had he known of the death of his wife and children; sometimes God can be surprisingly kind.

Who died last of that little family of four, none knew and tongues were busy over whether the Aults or the Rutledges would fall heir to the heavy table linens and rich draperies and fine china and silverware in the house on Depot Street; but on the day they led Major Rutledge's horse, with boots reversed from the stirrups, from the church to the cemetery over on the hill, there was only grief for the three big brothers home on leave, who had loved their golden-haired sister above all else.

' An inauguration of this country's greatest President did not make page one of the daily papers. It was not until David turned to the inside pages that he read that Abraham Lincoln had been inaugurated for a second time. The front-page stories that morning dealt with Sherman "somewhere in Carolina," Sheridan on his way up the Shenandoah Valley and Grant mudbound in Virginia.

It took the *New York Herald* fifteen thousand words of hand-written copy, however, to tell the story of Lincoln's second inauguration on Saturday, March 4, 1865. When the reader of the *Herald* turned to page four on Monday, March 6, he began to read:

"The morning of the inauguration day opened most

inauspiciously. A violent rainstorm prevailed. The wind howled viciously. The rain poured in torrents. The streets were transmuted into beds of rivulets. Upon looking out from the chamber windows the scene presented was mud everywhere, and not a dry spot to set foot upon. A pretty prospect, indeed, for a grand procession. Thousands of anxious visitants to the great political center of the republic awoke with feelings of deep disappointment. They had come hither for enjoyment. They were doomed to seek it by trudging through a sea of mud and a torrent of rain. But they had come to Washington to take part in an inauguration, and participate in it they would at whatever sacrifice of patent leathers or of dignity. Pantaloons were tucked in boottops, skirts were looped up. The spirit stirring fife and drum, and the swelling music of innumerable brass bands were already sounding, and the heavy tramp of soldiers, firemen, civic societies marching to the rendezvous was heard, warning loiterers that the time of action had come. Thousands were arriving from Baltimore to take part in the ceremonies.

"All are ready to start. Abraham Lincoln is to be for the second time inaugurated President of the United States. To those who were in Washington four years ago today what a contrast is presented! . . ."

The writer went on for two-thirds of a column to contrast the day with the inaugural in 1861, and then returned once more to the weather. It was not until he had meandered through every detail of day and weather, and after about thirteen thousand words, that the inauguration itself was mentioned at its proper sequence.

A month later the *New York Herald* related a far more

momentous event with headline "Highly Important!" and a second deck which read: "The President Shot."

Between the two headlines, springtime had come again and April and Appomattox. The round-shouldered clerk from the country store at Galena had conquered the South's proud spirit at last and the ore from the Comstock lode paid the debt of four long years of war. Nothing has ever paid its toll of tragedy of bitterness and broken lives and hearts, not even after three-quarters of a century when the weekly *Hillview Hawkeye* recorded another news item under the date of August 4, 1937:

"S. S. Haun, Hillview's last Civil War veteran, died at noon today. No funeral arrangements have been made as we go to press."

Victoria and her mother were far from home when so-called peace came to a war-weary country. Mrs. Cartwright had had a sudden alarming illness and Elizabeth Ash had taken her youngest daughter with her on a hurried trip East. The crisis was over before they reached there, but the two stayed on for a short visit. Victoria had been very proud when David had put them on the train for their long journey. She had had a tiny bonnet thick with ruches around the face and a bunch of rosebuds tucked up in one corner. Her little hoop skirts were miniature replicas of Elizabeth's, and she wore her first inside petticoat wrong side out so it would show all nicely finished when she switched her little skirts. She felt almost as grown-up as her mother to whose hand she held so tightly, although she did long for a pair of coral earrings like those Elizabeth was wearing.

She found the Cartwright house very different from the Ash house in Hillview, and very wonderful. She would steal into the darkened parlor with its closed shutters and parade in stately solitude back and forth in front of the gold-framed oval mirror with its haughty eagle at the top. The furniture was covered with worn faded yellow damask instead of the shiny new horsehair on the Hillview parlor set. In the center of the room was a table of teakwood on which stood a blue jar filled with rose leaves dried with spices. Victoria would lift the cover and sniff luxuriously. She thought it was the most beautiful room she had ever seen, although she did wish it had an alabaster hand holding up three peacock feathers as in the parlor at home. The peacock feathers had always seemed to her the height of all elegance.

There was a storeroom in one wing of the Cartwright house that was almost as fascinating as the parlor, although for different reasons. Here stood barrels of flour and sugar and other provisions. Victoria's tiny feet led her time and again on surreptitious visits to this room until one morning her lusty screams brought the household running. She had leaned too far over the big barrel in which was the brown sugar and in her greedy haste had lost her balance. They found her head-down in the barrel with feet upwards, and yelling to high heaven in her fright. "That's what happens to naughty little girls," her mother told her, but Robin went around all day chuckling at the remembrance of Victoria standing on her head.

Victoria adored Robin above all people. To her mother's horror, she insisted on calling him Robin in-

stead of grandfather. "Where did you get such an idea?" her mother asked. "It isn't respectful." "Don't try to stop her, Elizabeth," Robin said. "I don't feel like anybody's grandfather and I certainly wouldn't feel natural if anyone began respecting me too much. It makes me happy to have her call me Robin." Of Squire Ash Victoria was a little afraid. He looked so stern and sad. "He's thinking about your Uncle John who was killed at Gettysburg," Elizabeth explained. "He really is the kindest of men. It was very generous of him to give me that beautiful Brussels lace shawl when times are so hard and who knows whether or not all these shinplasters are really worth anything."

Victoria knew one day when Squire Ash came over to give her, too, a present that her mother was right. She had never had such a splendid gift before. It was a glass ball with a snowstorm inside when you shook it, and in the center of the snowstorm was a little girl in a red cloak. Victoria didn't know which she loved more—her glass ball or Romeo, the little rooster down the road at Aunt Caroline's. She was so devoted to Romeo that finally Aunt Caroline's husband gave him to her. When she came trudging up the road with him in a covered basket, her joy knew no bounds. "And Robin says he'll get the old parrot cage down from the attic and I can take him clear home to Iowa," she announced happily. "Victoria, I will not travel with that squawking, crowing bird," her mother told her with finality. "Your grandfather would think up some foolish thing like that." Victoria wept loudly and was very naughty indeed until Robin told her that he had been thinking the matter over and had de-

cided that, even if her mother changed her mind, it would be heartless to take Romeo so far away from all his Juliets. So Romeo was left behind when Elizabeth and Victoria started homeward.

It was a slow and strange and sad trip. An exhibitionist who was a murderer and perhaps also a madman had shot one of the greatest men of all time. Abraham Lincoln was dead. As the funeral train rolled westward, great fires burned along the way to honor and to mourn a murdered President, and by the tracks stood hundreds who had come to stand in silent tribute. They had come at dawn and at midnight, in carriages and in buggies and on horseback and on foot, from the streets of cities, from towns and hamlets, from outlying farms. On Victoria it all made a lasting impression. She always remembered, too, that in Chicago their train was switched to a siding and remained there for many hours because of the funeral train on its way to Springfield. Tired of sitting, Elizabeth and Victoria walked for several blocks along streets lined with pleasant two-story homes with gardens. "I can remember a house in which there was a woman at a piano singing," Victoria told her daughter. "The house had a little flight of two or three steps leading to the front door. She was singing

'The years creep slowly by, Lorena,  
The snow is on the grass again.'

I was only five years old, but I have always remembered because her voice was so low and lovely."

When Victoria talked to her daughter of long ago, she referred always to the time as "in early day." She used

the singular and not the plural of the word "day," and so accustomed was her daughter to the expression that it was not until she was a grown woman that she thought to analyze it and to realize its strangeness.

The early day of Victoria's childhood was a simple world filled with homely ways, yet even in Hillview where servants were unknown there was a caste system as rigid as that of India. "Dog my cats, if I was rich, my boys would marry the Hamlin girls," Dave Antles, the town's handy man, would say; and thereby told the whole story.

Jonathan Hamlin had by far the finest house in Hillview. It did not compare with the pretentious château built by Jean de Boucher twenty miles north near Anamosa, for which he had imported an architect from Quebec to build a copy of his ancestral home in France, nor did it have a ballroom with springs under the floor and a blue ceiling with golden stars, as did the big Stanley house on the farm east of Madrid. It was, however, so imposing a house that Hillview referred to it with pride as "Hamlin's Folly." It boasted white marble fireplaces in all the landscape-papered bedrooms and a crystal chandelier of tinkling splendor in the parlor, and most pretentious of all, a tall wooden Gothic tower in which Jonathan Hamlin played chess with his few chosen friends. The Folly, as was customary with houses so designated, was not in the town itself but stood on the ridge of the hill beyond the college and was reached by crossing a stile. Victoria had never crossed it, but Hallie had, and thereby entered into another world. It was she who told the spell-bound Victoria of the golden harp which stood in the octagonal parlor with its long windows. If Dave Antles

knew that if he was rich his boys would marry the Hamlin girls, Hallie was equally sure that if she were rich she would have a golden harp; but Hallie never had her harp.

"And at the back there is a garden—oh, not a bit like our garden," Hallie explained to the wide-eyed Victoria. "There is a marble pool in the center and all around it are yew trees cut to look like gentlemen and ladies in big hoop skirts. It's beautiful!"

Hallie had crossed the stile and become familiar with all these wonders through her acquaintance with the two Hamlin daughters, Maggie and Emily. She often rode with them in the winter in their fine cockleshell sleigh which Jonathan Hamlin used to visit his outlying farms and to go about the countryside to conduct the impromptu banking business which was the only thing of its kind Hillview enjoyed. Of the two girls, Hallie preferred the company of gentle Emily, the younger, although there was no doubt in her mind that she admired red-haired Maggie far more. Maggie's best friends in Hillview were boys. Although she was sixteen, none ever accused her of coquetry. "She's a tomboy, that's what she is," sniffed Elizabeth Ash, as she watched Maggie one day wrestling with Will Albright—and throwing him, too. "Why, it's disgraceful. I can't care what the Hamlins pretend to be; I don't like it." "But she has a nice face, Elizabeth," David answered. "I like the straightforward way she looks at you out of her steady, blue eyes. And she's never silly with the boys or bold with them as many a girl."

One Saturday morning at breakfast Elizabeth told Victoria that she wanted her to do an errand for her. "I want you to take the chicken broth I made yesterday over to

Mrs. Hamlin," she said. "Hallie won't be back from visiting the Nashes in the country until late this afternoon and I want the Hamlins to have it for their dinner. Mrs. Hamlin and Emily are both sick in bed, and goodness knows how they're managing with that minx Maggie doing the cooking for them."

"Will I see the harp?" Victoria asked breathlessly.

"Of course not. Don't be silly," her mother silenced her. "You're to come right home as soon as you've left the broth and asked how Mrs. Hamlin and Emily are."

It was a May-faced and morning-eyed world into which a properly pantaletted Victoria walked with her covered pail of chicken broth. The way to the Hamlin house led her into the campus past Main Hall of red brick with its white cupola and white trimmings and along a path fragrant with wild crabapple blossoms to another red-brick building which housed the Ladies' Dormitory. Beyond lay a thick grove and then the stile. After Victoria crossed that stile, life was never quite the same for her again.

When she arrived at The Folly, Victoria pulled the bell carefully and waited. Nothing happened. She pulled again, without results, although in the rear of the house she could hear a steady "thump! thump!" that indicated someone was about. After a third pull, Victoria found her way around to the back door. It was open and Maggie was revealed throwing a small round object against the wall.

"Hello! Come in," she said with her friendly smile, as she stooped to pick up the fallen object. "I say, Victoria, don't tell your mother what I was doing, will you?"

Too shy to say that she did not know what it was Maggie had been doing, Victoria set her pail on the table and

explained its contents.

"That is good of your mother," Maggie thanked her. "It's almost as though she knew about the biscuits, isn't it? You see, I tried to make them for Ma and Emily, but they turned out hard as bricks and I've been bouncing 'em against the wall for fun. Ma and Em are just about starved.

"Sit down and tell me about yourself, Vicky, before you go home," she invited. "You go to school, don't you, and who is your seatmate?"

"Willie Ruff," Victoria answered shyly, as she wound her legs about the round of the chair. Maggie started and a strange expression came over her face.

"You mean the little colored boy?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes," Victoria answered and was suddenly loquacious. "No one else would sit with him, so I said I would. I don't mind. And Pa and Ma don't, either. Pa said it was mean no one wanted to sit with him. He's clean and he's nice and he washes my slate for me."

"Do you know his grandmother?" Maggie questioned, and there was still the strange expression on her face. "Old Mammy Ruff who lives in that little plaster-covered cottage on the edge of Craigie's Woods?"

Victoria answered yes, that she had seen old Mammy Ruff once when she and Jimmy had been to pick flowers in the woods near by.

"Did you ever hear anything about her telling fortunes?" Maggie persisted.

"Yes," Victoria replied, "Hallie wanted to go and have hers told, but Ma wouldn't let her."

"Well, I went, only you mustn't tell anybody ever."

Maggie bounced another biscuit absent-mindedly against the wall.

"What did she tell you?" Victoria unwound her legs from the chair in her eagerness, "I won't tell—ever."

"She said she saw me sailing away across the ocean and dining off gold plate with royalty at my side and living in a castle and being a fine lady." Maggie paused out of breath. "Now, why did I have to tell you such nonsense? You're only a baby."

"I'm not a baby," Victoria answered gravely, "and I think most likely it will all come true."

"Well, anyway, I sat under the ginkgo tree on the lawn last night after Pa had gone to bed and combed my hair and made a wish that it all would—you know, if you wish under that Japanese tree, whatever you wish is sure to come true. I say, all this does sound silly, doesn't it? But I just had to tell somebody."

"I won't tell anyone—ever," Victoria repeated gravely. Then she started up guiltily, in the remembrance of her mother's command to come home as soon as she had finished her errand. Desire was too much for her, however, and she paused halfway to the door.

"Maggie," she asked in a small reverent voice, "may I see your golden harp?"

On her way home over the stile and through the fragrant grove Victoria did not think of Maggie's strange fortune as prophesied by Mammy Ruff, nor even of the scolding which she would receive from her mother for her long delay. She only knew that, like Hallie, she, too, wanted a harp; but whereas Hallie had only dreamed of her golden ambition, Victoria planned for it in all the

wisdom of her six short years. "I'm going to ask Ma as soon as I get home if I can't begin to take music lessons," she resolved. That would be the first step toward her goal.

She did not think of Maggie and there was no way that she could know that one day along her homeward path would stand another, newer building on the campus in which would hang an oil portrait by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema of a laughing, frank-eyed beauty in white lace gown and hat and fluffy parasol of the Mauve Decade, or that the students would point to it with pride and say to visitors: "That's Lady Cedarleigh, you know. Her father built Prexy's house." Not even old Mammy Ruff had been able to see all the amazing steps that intervened by which Jonathan Hamlin would move to California, where his older daughter would meet a scoundrel who absconded with her money and nearly broke her gay, young heart; nor the trip to Lake Tahoe in the mountains where she was introduced to the titled Englishman who became her husband and who took her across the sea to be the dear friend of none other than a royal princess, the Queen's own daughter; nor the Edwardian salons of London and the big country houses where the wit of a red-haired woman who couldn't make biscuits was the envy and despair of the sophisticated and the great.

Old Mammy Ruff did not see these things, nor the villa near Cannes where the girl who had been Maggie would live out the last of her long life, alone but never lonely, to die so many miles of land and water from her ginkgo tree. Maggie must have thought often of The Folly and the little college among the cornfields those last days in the South of France, for it was then that she

willed her portrait to a Crollon she had not seen for over sixty years.

Old Mammy Ruff did not see all this, and if she had, few would have believed her vision.

Only the very wise have learned that fact is always stranger than fiction.

"Victoria, you have loitered," said Mrs. Ash as Victoria came trudging back with her empty pail. "It is late and you haven't learned your Sunday catechism."

"I'll have time to do it tomorrow, if I get up early," Victoria protested.

Jimmy, at the cooky jar in the kitchen, overheard the conversation. He began to chant in singsong fashion a verse from his long-discarded third reader:

"Tomorrow, tomorrow, not today!  
    'Tis thus the idle ever say.  
Tomorrow I will strive anew,  
Tomorrow I will seek instruction,  
Tomorrow I will shun seduction,  
    Tomorrow this and that will do.'"

"Jimmy, be quiet," his mother admonished. "Why, Victoria, what is it? Your eyes are big as saucers. What has happened?"

"Nothing, ma. But—can I begin to take music lessons from Mrs. Stevens?"

Victoria's first music book, *The Silver Lute* by George F. Root, who wrote "The Battle Cry of Freedom," and published by Root & Cady, Chicago, 1865, is still in existence. You can still read the testimonials to its worth as given on the inner cover by such musical authorities as

F. G. Baker, "Prof. of Music, in Wheaton College"; A. C. J. Kaufman, "Prof. of Music, Lyons Female Seminary"; George A. Mietzke, "North Granville (N.Y.) Ladies Seminary." The merit of cabinet organs which surpass in their line "whether French or American" are also vouched for here by the *New York World*, the *New York Examiner*, the *New York Observer* and others, including a mysterious unknown signing himself "Irenaeus."

In *The Silver Lute* Messrs. Root and Cady labeled every selection carefully. Each was chosen with a fine feeling of correlation between subject matter and the lesson to be learned. Thus, "I Have No Mother Now" was "For the Practice of the Relative Minor"; "In the Dark November Sky" showed "the Relative Minor G"; "Our Fathers, Where are They?" illustrated the "Relative Minor F." Victoria's favorite was the more cheerful selection which began:

There's music in the air,  
When the infant morn is nigh.

although she thrilled over "Nellie Lost and Found" with its rousing chorus which commanded:

Wake the boys to look for Nellie!  
Stay not for the dawn.  
Who shall sleep when from the mother's fold  
One little lamb is gone?

Victoria learned to play them all in an incredibly short time, even to "The Star-Spangled Banner" on page 172. So smart a little girl as she should not cry over her going away, Mrs. Stevens declared when Victoria burst into

tears the day her teacher moved to Clinton.

"Vicky, I'm ashamed of you," she said; but after she had kissed the child good-bye, she went to the village and purchased a china-headed doll with smoothly painted black hair and blue eyes and very pink cheeks whose features were those of the prized figures of the Staffordshire potteries where many china heads of dolls were made for the American trade.

"There," Mrs. Stevens said as she hurried back with the doll for Victoria. "Kiss me quick. I'm afraid I'll miss my train."

"Oh!" cried Victoria. "Oh! Her name is Hattie. For you, Mrs. Stevens. And I'll love her always."

It was not long, however, before the tragedy of Mrs. Stevens's departure was forgotten in a greater one in the Ash home itself. More and more Victoria was allowed to go with little Nora Friendly to play in David's shop which, with his office, was housed in a big brick building that had been started as a church in the early fifties and then abandoned. The unfinished church, on a lot directly back of the Ash home, was an ideal place for the two children, for there were always shavings with which to make innumerable curls and two wonderful swings whose ropes David had fastened to the rafters of the building at a height the equivalent of three stories. Here Victoria and Nora played hours at a time while Elizabeth Ash lay at home in a darkened room from which even the noise of a ticking clock had been excluded.

Elizabeth's old nervous attacks had returned. With them now came other alarming symptoms, including a constant hacking cough. Dr. Doran shook his head and

Mrs. Twiss next door whispered: "Galloping consumption." At last David decided to send Elizabeth to Dansville in New York, where there was a famous sanitarium which Squire Ash recommended.

Dansville, south of Rochester, is now on one of the main railway lines, but in the sixties the last seven miles from Wayland were traversed by stagecoach. The sanitarium, known as "Our Home on the Hillside," has had a long and interesting history. At the time of the Civil War it enjoyed a prestige somewhat comparable with that of the Mayo institution in Minnesota. People came to Our Home from distant places with their various ills and went away singing its praises. While its methods were considered radical, many of the foremost physicians of the country sent their patients there for diagnosis and treatment. In the days of hoops and voluminous skirts and petticoats and chignons, it put its female patients in knee-length skirts with the bloomers first conceived by Amelia Bloomer of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and cut their hair. Special treatments of baths were given. Great attention was paid to massage, which was usually done by strapping Irish girls not long off the boats from the other side. Sensible diet charts were followed and regular exercises was a part of the routine. A croquet ground constructed on an artificial shelf on the hillside back of the recreation hall was in constant use.

It was here to Our Home on the Hillside that a distracted David brought his Elizabeth in the June of 1866. The plan was for her to stay a year, or longer if necessary, to regain her health. A bundle of letters in Victoria's old walnut desk tells the story of those anxious days for the

Ash family. They tell also of simpler lives in a simpler world—a world as lost to us today as Lyonnesse.

Dansville, New York  
June 14, 1866

Dear Children,

I improve the present to write you we arrived here yesterday about half-past two. Your mother stood the journey better than I had expected. She was very tired, however. She is now up at the water cure. I am writing from the Brewster House. We feel very lonely without you. Dr. Hurd has made a partial examination and he and Dr. Jackson will make another tomorrow. If people ask you, tell them that the doctor thinks he can help her.

Your Ma feels quite uneasy about Jimmy's hoarse cough. She says Hallie must wash his chest well and put a wet cloth on it, covered with a dry flannel. You must be good children and try to get along until I come back.

David Ash

Hillview, Iowa  
June 21, 1866

Dear Elizabeth,

After being delayed for twenty hours, I arrived about seven this evening and found all well. The garden looks rather the worse for weeds, but better than some I saw on my way from the depot. Victoria—poor thing—she cried because she wanted to see her Ma. I had to go and walk with her to quiet her. Jimmy's face looks very long.

Brother Twiss could not wait until I got home. He hailed me to know how you were.

Be hopeful and cheerful. Eat plenty. Try to get fat and lazy.

David Ash

To My Dear Wife, E. C. Ash.

Hillview, Iowa  
June 22, 1866

Dearest Elizabeth,

Another day has passed and I am about to talk to you this evening a little. Hallie has gone to the Society at the college. Jimmy and Victoria are making whips in the backyard from a limb that broke off of one of the trees. The students are passing to the Societies and there is considerable stir as usual before Commencement. Other things considered, I think the world moves as usual. During the day I have been catching potato bugs and pulling weeds.

Victoria and Jimmy have just come in and I must light the lamp to finish my letter. Brother Dimmitt and wife just called to inquire after you. Were going to the Society. They feel very anxious that you may be benefited by your effort to regain your lost health.

The cistern is over half full. No lack of water.

I found nothing done at the church since I left.

You have no idea how thoughtful Victoria is. She is about as good as Hallie around the house. She is a great comfort to me. Jimmy tries hard to do as he thinks you would like to have him and is a very good boy. Hallie runs and fusses so much that she does not have time to do what she otherwise would.

The wheat looks well at the farm and part of the corn is first-rate. We shall have enough for our own use. The calf looks well. I guess he got most of the cream they did not use on the strawberries. The currants are getting ripe and everything in the garden is looking well now. Victoria often says if Ma were only here to have some of these strawberries. We all miss you so. You must get well as fast as possible. Let nothing hinder you in your journey on the road to health. I suppose you have learned croquet by this time. I will fix a ground for you when you come home. I have written to have the Atlantic Monthly and Harper's and Godey's sent

to you at the Home so you will have something to read in your spare time.

Do not fret about us as we shall do well.

Believe me, yours truly,

David Ash

To My Dear Wife Elizabeth Ash.

Hillview, Iowa

June 25, 1866

Dear Elizabeth,

Another day has almost passed and I am trying to fulfill my promise to write you. This afternoon I hoed in the garden. After tea I shall set a few cabbage plants. Hallie has been to class today to be examined. I think I shall attend some of the examinations. Jimmy was examined in Greek and Latin today. Is to be further examined tomorrow. Victoria hangs to me like a young puppy. Please write if I shall get any currants and have them canned.

If you think it will necessary for you to go to a warmer climate this fall, let me know soon so that I may be ready. There is a woman from Indiana who wants to buy a home. I think I can sell without any trouble.

Be of good cheer. Try not to worry about us. We all want to see you very much.

Yours,

David Ash

To Mrs. David Ash.

Our Home

June 24, 1866

Dear David,

This is Sunday. O, how I think of home this morning. I do not feel as well as I did when you left. I have the headache again. I want to hear from home so much. I think I will be more contented when I do. I want you to write all about Commencement, how Hallie read and all about the rest. How

is Jimmy's cold? Does he cough? I worry so I can not sleep. O, I hope I shan't have to stay here long. I want to come home so much. I will try and stay a while if I can feel that I am getting better.

Tell Victoria to be a good girl. I want to see her so much. Poor thing. Tell her Ma sends her a great many kisses. I want you and Hallie to write often, and Jimmy, too.

E. C. Ash

Hillview, Iowa  
June 29, 1866

Dear Elizabeth;

We have just received your first letter. I can not tell you how glad we are to hear from you. We have been to the post office every night for five days, only to be disappointed. Jimmy has no cold. Victoria and Hallie are well.

As to Commencement, it passed as well as usual. Hallie read the best of any of the undergraduate girls. There was a large crowd. Several told me that Hallie was the only girl that read so as to be heard and I think her essay was better than any one else's. You speak of being lonely. If you knew how lonely I feel when you are away, you would get well as fast as you possibly can. It seems as though I can not live without you. Be hopeful and cheerful. Victoria sends a thousand kisses.

Yours, David Ash

To My Dear Elizabeth.

Our Home  
June 30, 1866

Dear David,

I feel so uneasy about you all. I thought my side was very much better but I coughed so last night that I don't feel as well as I did. O, I am so anxious to get home. Tell Victoria her Ma wants to see her so much. I don't want her to run

in the street unless she is with you. It is time for me to go and walk so I will close this time.

Hoping to hear from you soon,

E. C. Ash

It seems so foolish for me to stay here. They have done nothing for me that I can't do for myself at home. I can live on mush at home as well as here. I have learned how they give the baths and I can do for myself all they can do for me here.

Hillview, Iowa,  
July 4, 1866

Dear Elizabeth,

I had expected a letter from you tonight but was disappointed. It is rather hard to make me write so often and you write so little. The Fourth passed off quietly here. Several loads of old folks went to the river to hunt and fish and have a good time generally. There is to be a Masonic festival tomorrow evening. They are determined that I shall go with Hallie, but I do not feel like it. They take supper at the Ballard House.

Jimmy has bought a calf and I have bought a hog so you see we are going in for live stock in a big way. I have just mowed the yard. The children are going to pick gooseberries tomorrow. There are plenty of currants and blackberries and wild plums but I do not care whether or not we put any up, since we may go to a warmer climate for your health.

A kiss from Victoria and love from us all,

David Ash

To My Elizabeth.

Hillview, Iowa  
July 5, 1866

Dearest Elizabeth,

We were so glad to receive your two letters this evening but so sorry to hear you are homesick. It makes me down-hearted to have you fret in this way and thus throw away

all the benefits of your treatments. I do not blame you, but think how much is at stake. I only ask you to stay long enough to satisfy—say, five or six weeks. We get along fully as well as I expected—better—if it were not for the anxiety we feel for you and the vacant seat at the table and the ten thousand other little things that remind us you are away.

You must be hopeful, cheerful. Be a girl again and if you get to be young and girlish again, I, too, shall feel young once more. Care about nothing but getting well. Keep your chin up and enjoy yourself.

Victoria is not up yet. She is as much attached to the kittens as ever. She has to fix their basket just so for them every night. Jimmy can not bear to think of selling the colt. He has a yoke of steers.

Oh, I want you to come home well. I think that we shall all know better how to live and enjoy life. I look forward to your return with more pleasure than you can ever know. A kiss for you,

David Ash

I feel that we have not taken as much amusement as we should have. When you come home we shall have plenty of riding, fishing, hunting, playing ball or anything else that will be beneficial to you. If you think it would help you, I will come to Dansville and stay with you. I can take a room in one of the cottages. George Bowman says that the climate in California is beneficial. Land is from \$30 to \$80 per acre there.

To My Dearest Elizabeth.

Hillview, Iowa  
July 8, 1866

Dear Ma,

Jimmy and Hallie are writing you, so Pa is writing for me to you, too. I went to Sunday School this morning and stayed with Pa to meeting. Then I came home with Jimmy and Pa stayed to class. I wish I could send you a rose. There are

four bushes with roses still on them. Ma, I send you a great lot of kisses. Get well as fast as you can. Pa says that if you wish he will take me to Dansville to live with you. Don't cry, Ma, but get well and come home as soon as you can. Goodbye, Ma, I want to give you a big hug. I'm sending you one of the roses in my letter.

From your little girl,

Victoria Ash

To My dear Ma, E. C. Ash.

Hillview, Iowa

July 15, 1866

Dear Absent Mother,

Again the swift moving car of time has brought Sabbath and rest to all. Every night as report is brought from the Post Office we grieve because Ma has not written. Disappointment is on every face.

Had not Victoria better have a new dress? You know she has but three every-day ones and the old green is almost gone. I have her chemise done, except for the tatting on the sleeves. You remember her drawers were too short. I can make them longer by putting insertion in and setting on a piece. I will if you think best. Would you wear my white dress to church? How I wish you could be home again. It is so hard to have you from home. Goodbye,

Hallie Ash.

I am enclosing a drawing of the pattern with which I am embroidering the scallops on the new petticoat for Victoria.

Hillview, Iowa

July 15, 1866

Dear Mother,

It is Sunday so I am going to write you. All of us are well. I worked two (2) days and a half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) for Mr. Vansant last week and got one (1) dollar and a quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ). I ring the bell Sundays for church. Mr. Dimmit gives me a dollar if

I ring it this vacation. I drive Mr. Knott's and Jim Smith's cows now and get a quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) a month. I have dressed out fifty-three (53) pickets for our fence. I should like to have you come home but want you to stay till you get well. I guess I must close for this time.

James Ash

Hillview, Iowa  
July 15, 1866

Dear, Dear Ma,

We are all sad and lonely today, so I am having Pa write to you for me. The days seem so long when you are away, but we are willing to wait so that you will get well and then not have to go away again.

I go to the church with Pa almost every day and watch the men working. It is so warm it nearly roasts me. I got your fan to fan myself with. Jimmy bought me a little doll baby. It is such a neat little thing. Hallie has draped it. I wish you could see the kitties. They have grown so large and play so much. Pa will not let them stay in the house. I am going with Jimmy when he rings the bell for church. I have no more news but send lots of kisses and my best love. OoooooooooooooOoooooooo The big two kisses are from Pa and the little ones from me. I will try to be a good girl while you are away. Goodbye, dear Ma.

Your little  
Victoria Ash

To My Dear Ma, E. C. Ash.

Hillview, Iowa  
July 15, 1866

My Dearest Elizabeth,

It has been a pleasant day, but there is a vacancy in my heart nothing can fill. I am miserable with anxiety because you do not write. I have lived in a feverish state for the last three weeks—wanting to hear from you, wondering why you

do not write, fearing that you are not able to do so.

I am sitting by the front window with the blinds open. The moon is shining in so brightly that I do not need a lamp. Oh, Elizabeth, I love you so. When you come home, nothing shall ever part us again.

Yours,  
David Ash

Hillview, Iowa  
July 17

Dear Elizabeth,

Yours of July 11 came to hand yesterday. We are so glad to hear that you are coming home. I only hope it will be for the best. We do not know how to live without you, but would go on trying if Dansville would be of benefit to you. I shall not attempt to advise you. All of the neighbors think that you should stay longer, but I have always found that your own judgment is as good a guide as any that I could have. I have written Dr. H. but have not had a reply as yet. Get all home prescriptions. You will take a ticket from Wayland to Buffalo, and from there a ticket to Clinton. Your trunk can be checked through directly from Buffalo to Clinton. I shall not write again unless I hear you have changed your mind. I remain,

Yours,  
David Ash

Once these lived; knew youth and hope; had dreams as bright as a louis d'or and felt despair as dark as death. After them they left a packet of letters in the lacy hand of long ago . . . a pressed rosebud from a bush growing by a white house with green shutters . . . the pattern of a scallop on a child's petticoat.

Strings of sand from a vanished shore.

Once more time proved the wisdom of Elizabeth Ash's judgment. On her return she adhered to a strict health regime based on the principles learned at Our Home, although she never allowed David to lay out the croquet ground on the lawn. The headaches were less frequent. The cough, which was undoubtedly of nervous origin, disappeared. "I am determined to get well here at home," she said. She succeeded in her determination.

The year following Elizabeth's illness was marked by two events of historical importance. The first was the purchase of Alaska by the United States from Russia for seven million dollars; the second was the increasing turmoil into which the country was plunged over the proposed impeachment of unfortunate President Andrew Johnson. To the Ashes, however, the year 1867 was important for two quite different reasons. It was the year in which the long-delayed construction of the church was completed and David was given the contract for the new brick schoolhouse which was to be built beyond the stores on Main Street; it was also—and this was of far more significance—the year that Hallie was graduated from college.

Those in cathedral towns live and die to the sound of belfry bells. Victoria's entire life, too, was lived to their constant accompaniment, although for her the bells rang from college and not cathedral. Bells pealed all day from their brisk calling to the first class in early morning until the last class late in the afternoon. There was the long tolling of the bell each school day for morning chapel; bells for recitals, "programmes," concerts, "publics," debates, lectures; bells ringing hilariously for athletic vic-

tories; the rich-toned chime of the clock that called the hours and the quarters. All Hillview heard the bells, of course, but to the Ashes they seemed their very own, by virtue of their close proximity to the campus which lay like a beautiful park at their front door. "I cannot realize the bells will go on ringing when I am gone," Victoria said as she was dying.

The whole college and its campus seemed the Ashes' own. For forty years country folk left their dinner baskets within their white picket fence for safekeeping while they went to the Commencement exercises in the grove. Down through the decades they entertained Crollon's visiting bishops and alumni and public persons because hotel accommodations were lacking. It was by their door that all their little world passed on its way to the various entertainments at the college. Each succeeding year the faces of the students became as familiar to them as those of their family.

By 1867, the year of Hallie's graduation, Crollon had grown amazingly from its first modest beginning when it opened November 14, 1853, under the name of Conference Seminary. The seminary, under Samuel M. Friendly, its very able and scholarly principal, who was also listed in the catalogue as "Professor of Mental and Moral Science and Belles Lettres," had been a success from the start. By 1856 its one building, which was seventy-two feet long, forty feet wide and three stories high, was housing fifty-four boarders, including the faculty and preceptress. It had also under its roof the chapel, music and recitation rooms, kitchen and dining hall. All

this was stated with considerable pride in its catalogue, as was also the fact that the college had sufficient apparatus "to illustrate the most important principles of natural philosophy and chemistry." It did not add that the apparatus cost twenty-three dollars and was housed in the bedroom of the professor of natural science on the third floor.

After the erection of another and larger building known as Main Hall in 1856, the school attained the status of a regular college. The first two floors were devoted to executive offices and classrooms, the latter being supplied with seats made of single boards attached to the walls. The third floor was given over to the chapel and to the halls of the literary societies where the boys, known as the Adelphians and the Amphictyons, and the girls, called the Philomatheans, held their meetings. The Crollon catalogue stated that the new Main Hall boasted also a library and museum. Again, however, it showed discreet reticence in not explaining that the library, which consisted of fifty miscellaneous volumes, and the museum, which was a half bushel of minerals lodged behind a curtain in an abandoned piano box, were kept in a room twelve by twenty feet square on the main floor in which were also the above-mentioned apparatus and sleeping cot, stove, study table and personal belongings of the young professor of Greek.

By some curious magic of its own, however, Crollon—so called for a wealthy man who did not leave the college the money it hoped for—attracted from its earliest history a faculty of unusual men and women. This was due in no small degree to the personality of Stephen Dixon

Parr, the young Greek professor, who slept with the apparatus and library and museum during his first year at college. Like Elder Broden, he possessed a strange combination of qualities which made for success. He had a scholarly mind and a deep-seated belief in humanity's need of education. Unlike the Elder, he had social savoir-faire and personal charm inherited from his family traditions and Virginia background, combined with a certain Machiavellian ingenuity of mind which could accomplish his purpose against great odds. He lured to Crollon's faculty men who bore degrees from distinguished foreign universities and who found their way in later years into Who's Who through their textbooks and research work. Yet they remained here year after year teaching for infinitesimal salaries and giving to their students an education far superior to many a renowned and wealthy Eastern college.'

The college from which Hallie was being graduated so proudly in 1867 had offered her classes in pencil drawing and wax-flower making, but it had likewise given her sound instruction in Latin and Greek and French and mathematics. From a social viewpoint its advantages were more limited. The famous Rule 12 saw to that. Rule 12 read:

"Young ladies and young gentlemen will not associate together in walking or riding or stand talking together in the college halls, but if necessary they can secure permission to see the person they desire."

Young men could accompany young women to the debates and other public entertainments in the Society halls and were permitted to call upon them on Saturday nights

in the parlor of the girls' dormitory where the preceptress kept a watchful eye. In winter they might even invite them on daring bobsled parties, which were, of course, most carefully chaperoned. The high spot of social life at Crollon, however, was the Promenade. It was at a Promenade that Hallie fell in love with handsome Reuben Crane; and Hallie, since she lived at home with her parents, did not have to heed Rule 12 except on the campus.

Dancing was taboo, but marching was different and quite permissible, even in the rigid church atmosphere of a church college of the sixties. So march the young people did to music in the famous Promenades or Walk-Arounds which the faculty permitted several times each year on the second floor of Main Hall.

No mirrored crystal-hung ballroom with gleaming parquet floor and softly playing fountains sounding through damask-draped windows from stately gardens without ever held more glamour for its dancers than did the barren corridor of Main Hall when thrown open to the crinoline-skirted co-eds and their escorts for the Walk-Around. When the square piano, moved to one end of the corridor from one of the halls upstairs, began to tinkle tunes, lilting or lusty, not even the odoriferous big lard-oil lamp hanging from the ceiling could dispel the witchery. The empty classrooms, whose open doors revealed workaday blackboards and benches, might have been conservatories filled with fragrant and exotic flowers. The prairie-born swains and their girls became *Vere de Veres* and life was high and gay and beautiful.

In July, after a final Promenade had been held, which was so glorious that Victoria had no other ambition than

to grow up immediately in order to attend the next one, Hallie's Commencement came and with it her famous essay entitled "To Thy Self Be True." The whole family had listened night after night to her rehearsing of it at home after tea. All had added their own contribution in gestures and inflections.

"Why don't you put down your sewing a bit?" David asked Elizabeth one night after Hallie had been pronounced letter-perfect. "I declare, I don't believe I've ever seen you lean back in your chair in your life."

"There's never time," Elizabeth answered briefly, as she threaded another needle.

Second only in importance to Hallie's essay was the matter of her graduation gown. It was not on this, however, that Elizabeth was sewing so busily, for Robin Cartwright had ordered it straight from New York. The dress was perfect, except that Hallie had had to sew a tiny row of silk ruffles within to fill out the basque. It was made of twelve yards of white organdy with every ruffle and flounce edged with cherry-colored velvet and a cherry-colored sash to match. Robin had sent also a pair of flat-heeled cherry-colored morocco slippers, and Squire Ash had contributed a pair of gold earbobs with long gold fringe. On her graduation morning, when Hallie had bitten her lips to make them as red as her sash and netted her hair smoothly in her chignon after she had slipped on Robin's gown, David vowed that there was no girl more beautiful west of the Mississippi River. "He was so proud of her," Victoria told her daughter sadly long later. "You'll never know how proud he was of Hallie or how lovely she looked that day."

The whole Ash family was resplendent in new clothes to do honor to Hallie, even to Victoria in a new green plaid taffeta silk. Jimmy was very jaunty and grown-up in blue coat and mustard-colored breeches. Elizabeth looked stately and dignified in black bombazine with white lace collar. David was the proud father in gray broadcloth and the widest and richest of black silk cravats in which was a cameo pin.

"Have you written yet to accept the opening at Lynnsdale Female Seminary?" David asked his eldest daughter that night after the exercises were all over and the family was sitting in the twilight on the west porch facing the college. "The salary is good. I wouldn't keep them dangling too long."

There was a long silence. Then Hallie said in a small, hard voice:

"I'm going to marry Reuben Crane."

"Hallie!" her mother cried. "You can't! You can't!"

"There's nothing to be said against him."

"And nothing to be said for him."

"I love him. I tell you I am going to marry him. I can't live without him." She spoke with sudden passion. "I tell you, nothing you can say can stop me."

"Hallie, you mean it? You've made up your mind to marry this fellow without a penny and no prospects?" It was her father who questioned her.

"Yes." There was convincing finality in her tone.

Suddenly David Ash leaned forward and buried his head in his hands. His shoulders shook. When he straightened again there were tears on his cheeks. In a moment they had dried in the blaze of his eyes.

"By Godfrey, no!" he shouted as he jumped to his feet. "If you marry him after all I've worked and planned and hoped for you, you'll never come into my home again." He slammed the door after him as he went into the darkened house.

But Hallie had as fine a wedding as Hillview had ever seen, and no buckwheat field was sold to pay for it. David and Elizabeth Ash held their heads high. Everyone said what a handsome couple Reuben and Hallie made. After it was all over Jimmy went to the barn and cried his heart out, holding tight to the mane of Dolly, the colt. It was a day of grim gaiety which Victoria never forgot.

When Victoria was ten years old she had her picture taken at the Eberhardt Studio on Main Street. "Preserve the Shadow e'er the Substance Fade" was the warning with which Mr. Eberhardt advised prospective patrons in his neat weekly announcement in the Hillview paper, and thereby proved that he was a worthy pioneer of twentieth century high-pressure advertising.

As you open the doors of the blue velvet frame which holds still the picture of Victoria Ash, you see a little girl with soft brown hair combed back from the face and held with a ribbon in Alice-in-Wonderland fashion. A round lace collar is fastened at the throat with a coral pin. The big brown eyes that look at you with trusting sweetness are those of the child who fixed the kitties' basket every night, but the firm mouth and determined chin are those of the young woman-to-be who would make her husband the town's leading citizen.

It was thus Victoria looked when she met Vashti Gres-

ley and thereby entered on another spiritual adventure as lasting in its consequences as those which followed her trip over the stile.

Six miles to the southwest of Hillview were the Palisades, the name given to the beautiful bluffs that rose at that point high along the Cedar River. Here parties would come for an outing and for fishing and hunting and either a picnic dinner or a meal at the new log tavern built recently by a young man not long mustered out of the army. At that time there was no need to ask him why he hobbled about with a wooden peg. It was only a forgetful later generation who inquired: "How did you lose your leg, Captain Minot?" and who received the laconic answer: "Threshing machine. Grant's."

David and Elizabeth and Jimmy and Victoria came here to the Palisades one morning in early autumn in a carryall with the Twiss family and several other neighbors. Such an outing on an ordinary day that did not have even the excuse of being Fourth of July seemed to Elizabeth a bit of foolishness, but David had insisted they all needed a change and a rest. The day had been quite as pleasant as David had anticipated. Victoria sighed to think that it was nearly over. She had wandered out of sight of the group at the tavern and was sitting on a rock in a little inlet at the water's edge. She knew she must be getting back to the others.

Suddenly there was a splash of oars. She looked up the river. Around the bend, with all the panoply of sunset as a backdrop, came a boat in which was a girl in a white muslin dress with a narrow gold ribbon at the waist. The bright wide waves of her hair, copper-bronze and cut

short as a boy's, were tied with a ribbon of the same gold. Behind her swam a dozen or more dogs. She maneuvered the boat into the inlet.

"Hello!" She smiled with friendliness.

"Hello," Victoria answered shyly.

The girl stepped from the boat and fastened it expertly to a willow. She was tall with shoulders far too broad for that day's fashion. There was a fine and careless grace about her.

"I know you. You're Victoria Ash, aren't you?" she smiled again. Victoria nodded.

"I'm Vashti Gresley," the other explained.

"Yes, I know," Victoria answered. "You came from Ottawa to keep house for your brother Frank who's farming over the river. And my pa used to build bridges with your father."

"I suppose everyone knows about me after the threshers' dinner." Vashti made a little moue. "I'm going up to the crow's-nest for communion with my rebellious soul. Let me show you the way. It's jolly up there."

"You didn't see my path, did you," she went on, pushing aside the thick undergrowth. "It's really easy once you know the way. Frank came over last spring and made me a seat out of cedar branches. I come over often at sunset and sit for an hour or so."

She started up the bluff. Victoria followed. Halfway to the top Vashti stopped. On a precarious ledge of rock was a bench so concealed by the green cedars growing from the crevasses of the bluff that Victoria had not seen it at all from the shore below.

"Oh, lovely," she breathed, as she peered down the

cliff's side. Maidenhair ferns and bluebells grew in the crannies. Below flowed the river silently and peacefully in the sunset light.

"Do you like it in Iowa?" Vashti asked unexpectedly as they sat down.

"Why, I've always lived here," Victoria answered in surprise. "I can't tell how it would be to live anywhere else."

"Well, you can tell me what you heard about the threshers, anyway." Vashti laughed her lovely laugh. "It was terrible, I know. Please do tell me. I won't mind. Except I'm so sorry for Frank's sake."

"They—they said you were going to make an omelette for them for dinner and the last egg you broke was bad," Victoria admitted reluctantly, "so you turned the skillet upside-down on the stove and all the eggs in it and ran up on the hill and stayed all afternoon until the men had gone home."

"Yes, that was the way it was, Victoria. I don't know about Frank. Sometimes I think my father was mad to send him here and sometimes I think he was very wise. But as for me, I'm just not any good." She did not smile now. She looked suddenly like a hurt little girl.

"Oh, please, please don't mind," Victoria begged. She was afraid her new friend was going to cry. "It didn't matter. Truly it didn't. The threshers wouldn't have liked the omelette much, anyway." She knew that she wanted above everything in the world to keep this glamorous stranger from being hurt.

"What would the threshers have liked for dinner?" Vashti asked with interest. The hurt little girl who had

been going to cry was completely gone.

"They have the biggest appetites," Victoria explained seriously. "The farmers' wives most generally give them fried chicken and cold sliced ham and there's a big roast of beef with gravy and there's dumplings sometimes and all sorts of things like piccalilli and jellies and water-melon preserves and three or four kinds of pie and two kinds of cake and—well, there's just all sorts of things," she finished with anticlimax.

"And I, I thought I'd make them an omelette. Victoria, I'll tell you something. I was going to give them that because it's just about the only thing I could be sure would turn out right. And that turned out bad. I've tried and tried to learn. Really I have. And so I'm going away. Frank will be better off without me."

"But, Miss Gresley—"

"Call me Vashti."

"Oh, I shouldn't."

"Why not? We're friends, aren't we? Tell me, Vicky darling, we're truly friends?"

"Oh, yes." It seemed too wonderful to be true.

"All right. We're friends. So I'm going to tell you a secret. I meant it when I said Frank would be better off without me. He doesn't know it, but he's in love with Gretchen Swartz over the next hill."

"Gretchen Swartz?" It amazed Victoria that Frank Gresley, the elegant and debonair young man who had not so long ago worn white kid gloves in the fields to save his hands, would marry anyone like Gretchen.

Vashti read her thought.

"You're thinking how he used to wear the gloves

around the farm that he had for the balls in Ottawa," she said. "Well, he doesn't do that any more. He knows better now. He's learned, even if I haven't. He's getting to love the land, just as father thought he would. If he had someone to cook for him properly, he'd succeed here. And that would make father happy. Gretchen is a good girl. She can do all the things for him that should be done. She's pretty and she's smart, too. It will never occur to him to marry her while I'm around, but once I'm gone, it won't take him long to know what's been in the back of his mind for months without his realizing it."

"Gretchen will have him quick enough." There was a little edge in Victoria's tone. Then, with sadness:

"But you want to go away."

"Yes, I'm afraid I do. I love the woods and the cliffs and the river and my dogs and all those things. But I love Ottawa, too. It's a wonderful big city."

"They say that your aunt has the finest furs in Ottawa; finer even than those of the wife of the Governor General."

"Ottawa is splendid," Vashti continued enthusiastically. "They have houses with gas and running water. Think of it!" She laughed almost hysterically. "Think of going back to a place where all you do is put a match to a little pipe and there's a light and no chimneys to clean afterward or wicks to trim or lamps to fill and all you have to do to wash your hands is to turn a spigot and the water comes."

"But I don't understand. You don't have to get it from the well or pump it?"

"Frank and I don't even have a well here yet. The renters didn't do much to improve the place before we came. All we have is a spring, and I do get so bothered carrying all the water. No, my dear, I'm going away to Ottawa. Then in the spring, after all the Christmas parties are over, I'm going to England again."

This opened vistas to Victoria which left her speechless. She waited with parted lips.

"The last time I was over I spent a whole year there with my uncle, Sir Rowland, and Aunt Alisha. They have a lovely place in Surrey with broad lawns reaching down to the river. And when I'm there I can wear my earrings this way every day. Look!" Vashti gave a snap to one of her golden earbobs and it opened. Within nestled a sparkling diamond which had been enclosed in the modest golden shell.

"I'm going to wear them that way with the diamonds out every single day," Vashti went on fiercely, "and there nobody will think I'm crazy if I do. And I'll never eat an egg again as long as I live."

"I never saw anything so beautifull!" Victoria gasped. Vashti gave another snap to the bob and the revelation was gone. Once more she was matter-of-fact and gay.

"Vicky, would your mother let you come and stay with Frank and me for a few days before I go away? You'll nearly starve but we'll have lots of fun. Would you like to?"

"I'd like to more than anything in the world. I am sure Ma would."

"All right. That's arranged. I'll send you a note tell-

ing you when. Frank will come to fetch you. Sometime soon."

When Vashti had gone off in her boat after calling her dogs and minding not at all that they came at her barking and splashing her dress with muddy water, Victoria walked slowly back to the tavern. All the way to Hill-view in the carryall she was silent. She would tell of her meeting with Vashti when she was home alone with her family. During the six miles to town she hugged to her the thought of the day when she would have a pair of diamond earrings, as well as a golden harp.

Victoria did not have a chance to tell of her visit with Vashti, however, because that night a dreadful thing happened in the Ash home. David found Jimmy's shirt which had been missing from last week's wash. He came upon it, streaked with dirt and perspiration, in a little-used closet when he put away his fishing tackle which he had hastily taken out in the morning.

"Where did you wear that shirt to get it looking like that and why did you stuff it in the back of that closet?" he demanded of his son. Jimmy did not answer.

"James, did you go to Iowa City to play baseball with those boys last Sunday when you went to spend the day with William Bemis?"

"Yes." Jimmy looked his father in the eye guiltily but unflinchingly.

"James, I'll whip you for this. You did a wicked thing and then you tried to hide it. Come," he added sternly.

Suddenly Victoria was a fury. She ran to her father and pounded him with her little fists. "Don't you dare whip my brother," she screamed. "Don't you dare."

"Be quiet, Victoria," her mother commanded. "James did a sinful deed on the Lord's day, and with rough and common boys."

"He didn't! He didn't! He plays grand baseball and he was only having a good time. Pa, if you do, he'll run away like Freddy Morris when Professor Morris pulled him out of the town band in front of everybody and Ma will feed all the tramps like Mrs. Morris because she thinks maybe Freddy is hungry and a tramp and nobody feeds him. Jimmy'll run away and he'll never come back. Never. Never. I won't let you whip Jimmy. I—"

"Put the child to bed," David told Elizabeth. "Come, James." Jimmy got up and philosophically followed his father to the barn.

"I'll never forgive you!" Victoria screamed after her father as they went out the door; and she never quite did.

After that Victoria went about the house in stricken silence. Of Vashti she made no mention. It was not until Frank Gresley called at the house a week later that anyone knew of their meeting at the river. Frank explained to the surprised Ash family that Vashti had gone back to Ottawa suddenly a couple of days before and that she had asked him to bring Victoria a little box. When she opened it she found a hair brooch with Vashti's initials entwined. She never saw Vashti Gresley again, and Frank only once more; but that was many years later and under circumstances which would then have seemed incredible.

Victoria's friend Belle Watts sighed passionately for

a pair of bronze boots. They cost nine dollars and had jaunty heels and scalloped tops. Victoria admitted that any girl with proper self-respect would aspire to bronze boots, but she longed for something else still more. They said Anton Rubinstein was coming to America to give solo recitals. She wanted above all things to hear him play. She thought him even greater than Offenbach, although she had been thrilled when her music teacher told her how Napoleon III had wept when he heard a German regimental band playing Offenbach's music. It was the day after his opéra-bouffe empire had ended in the tragedy of Sedan.

Pretty Belle finally had her boots, but Victoria never heard Anton Rubinstein make a keyboard thunder in proud glory or sing tenderly in the gentlest of whispers. It was one of her few ambitions which she never attained. As a middle-aged woman, however, she made a special effort to hear another great musician named Josef Hofmann because at seventeen he had been Rubinstein's last pupil. "He was wonderful," she said after the concert, "but oh! if I could only have heard the master."

It was 1870 when Belle and Victoria were concerned with bronze boots and Rubinstein and Offenbach. Young Mrs. Reuben Crane and the other ladies of the country were wearing the arrogant polonaise and little hats with two-inch brims that tilted up saucily in the back to display a cascade of curls. They carried card cases made of diamond-shaped pieces of mother-of-pearl or tortoise shell, and the calling cards which they left at friends' houses at punctilious intervals were engraved in the finest of Spencerian script. Every lady possessed

an elegant fan, and if she were a true coquette there might be a tiny mirror on the backs of the outside sticks. Sometimes the belles used their fans for dance cards, and let their partners write their names on the sticks for the redowas and lancers and germans. (These were not danced in God-fearing Hillview, however.) The gentlemen, of course, wore spotless white kid gloves at all the formal parties, and on nearly all occasions the ladies wore gold bands on their wrists. You would never have suspected that one of the worst periods in the history of the country was at hand.

After every war come dark decades. From 1870 to 1880 was one of the darkest the United States of America has ever known. Those who endured through the turbulent thirties of the twentieth century have a fashion of saying, "There was never a depression like this." Men and women who lived through the seventies answer, "Perhaps not, but there have been far worse ones."

As a prelude to the seventies came Black Friday on September 24, 1869, when the price of gold rose to 162 as a result of the manipulations of Gould and Fisk. Bedlam raged in the Gold Room. When President Grant sent instructions from Washington that the government was to sell four million dollars of gold at once, the price dropped to 135 in thirty minutes. Ruined men raged through the streets hunting Gould and Fisk, swearing they would lynch them. "They say there hasn't been such an uproar in that part of town since they mobbed the rector of Trinity for continuing to pray for the king," Cousin Jonathan told David in a letter describ-

ing the day's events.

It was not until 1873, however, that the great depression struck the entire country. It came with no more warning to the unthinking than did the debacle in the autumn of 1929. When the famous banking house of Jay Cooke and Company of Philadelphia failed to meet its obligations on September 18, people were stunned. Before the end of the month the Stock Exchange had closed its doors. The total number of business failures for the year was over five thousand, and the amount of money involved was two hundred million dollars.

While Henry Ward Beecher thundered at his audiences from the pulpit of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, freebooters and carpetbaggers overran the land. Grant the hero had become a bewildered and gullible man in the White House, and the plodding and uninspired Rutherford B. Hayes who followed him in 1876 was of no help to a disrupted country. Grass grew in factory yards. Cobwebs covered the windows of vacant shops. The spoutless teapot in which the farm wife kept her butter and egg money was empty.

Iowa suffered in the dark decade of the seventies both financially and spiritually. The romance and high adventure of pioneer times were gone forever. Life in Victoria's "early day" had been simple but it had been motivated by ideals. In the seventies it became sordid.

In 1873 the grasshoppers and chinch bugs (the latter returned to Iowa in 1934) brought as great a tragedy to its citizens as the closing of Jay Cooke's had to the people of the East. So thick was the grasshopper plague in certain counties that the crushed insects greased the

tracks and stopped the trains. Sometimes the grasshoppers traveled as fast as twenty miles a day. In spite of the devastation they caused, corn sold as low as ten or twelve cents a bushel. It was cheaper to burn it than to sell it to buy coal. Wheat was delivered for thirty-seven cents a bushel. Farmers' wives received sometimes no more than five or six cents a dozen for eggs. A man in town received a dollar a day as standard wages. College graduates taught school for \$30 a month. A tight-fisted board of directors might get a high-school graduate for \$15. This was not so hard on the teacher as it sounds, however, since board and room might be obtained for \$2 a week. Living was cheap for everyone. Even from Iowa thousands managed a trip to Philadelphia where the new Corliss engine turned the machinery for the marvels of the Centennial.

Schemes of all sorts were promoted for the return of normal times. Political candidates promised to bring prosperity to the voters in return for the relatively small salaries they hoped to receive for their services. The Greenback party shouted that Wall Street was crushing the nation, and running true to form of all inflationary movements which have followed every depression of history, proposed printing-press money. The farmers called to high heaven for relief, and when it was not forthcoming, organized the Grange movement with co-operative stores, elevators and warehouses. Soon it was evident that these were frequently run for the farmers by men who had failed in their own affairs, and the farmers began to buy and sell again wherever they could most profitably. The Grange movement at its height,

however, succeeded in passing the Granger law of 1873—repealed in 1878—which fixed railroad charges that the roads called confiscatory. The Chicago & North-Western had a deficit of over \$600,000, the Illinois Central of nearly \$300,000 and eleven others had deficits and bonds in default.

The nation suffered, Iowa and Hillview and Crollon College suffered. So pressing were the financial needs of the college that when a special meeting of the trustees announced that the treasury was overdrawn to the amount of \$18,076 and that several large notes were also outstanding, the campus was mortgaged to an insurance company and each trustee also furnished a personal bond. The faculty donated a fourth of their salaries to aid the school in its crisis. The college agent who recruited new students during summer vacation slept in railway stations to save the college hotel bills. The walls of the new gray-stone chapel which had been started beyond the old Seminary building came to a standstill when they were two-thirds completed. Even after the building was outwardly finished, only the first story was completed within; the auditorium with its windows boarded up remained untouched for many years.

It was in such an uncertain world that Hallie began her married life and Jim—Jimmy no longer—was graduated from college to find a place for himself and to earn a living.

David and Elizabeth Ash struggled long over the problem of young Jim. They did not contend that the world owed him a living, but they did believe parents owed it to their children to give them a proper start in life.

Should they buy for their son the shoe store for sale on Main Street and pray that he would become a successful merchant of Hillview? They had almost made up their minds to take this step when Elizabeth's mind revolted. She wanted something finer than fitting shoes for her son. She confided to David that for years she had hoped he would become a lawyer. A far-from-confident Mr. and Mrs. Ash went to call upon their friend Judge Hubbard in Cedar Rapids to ask if he would take Jim into his office to read law. Judge Hubbard was not impressed. He said he was convinced young Jim did not have a legal mind. The Ashes returned home in despair. Squire Ash, so soon to join his soldier son in the country graveyard by the Old Mill, was consulted. It was not until graduation was only two weeks away that word was received from him that his old friend Colonel North would take Jim into his law office.

After Commencement, Elizabeth got out her trunk with its Godey's ladies pasted decoratively within the lid and salted every garment of Jim's with tears as she packed them carefully inside; yet even as she cried over the separation, there remained in the back of her mind a hidden fierce joy that her son was leaving a country which only a little while ago had been so uncivilized that it had expected her to wear a sunbonnet to church on Sunday.

Just as Hillview suffered, so, too, must the Ashes have suffered in that dark decade. Hallie and Reuben, who had opened a hardware store there after their marriage, had to be "helped." Jim must be supported in the East until he could earn his own living. "I know now that we

were poor," Victoria told her daughter in speaking of those days, "but I never was made to feel it. I never was allowed to feel that we were pinched for money or that our parents worried as to how we all would live"; which was no small tribute to David and Elizabeth Ash and their resourcefulness and courage in times when poverty was the word on every lip.

Victoria was desolate over Jim's departure. Not even the new baby at Hallie's proved an antidote. There were always new babies at Hallie and Reuben's now and Victoria spent much of her time helping with the house-work of the sister who each year lost a little more of that soft beauty of which David had been so proud.

Victoria went to revival meetings and Sunday-school picnics and spelling bees and debates and concerts at the college. She entreated Father, dear Father to come home in a performance of *Ten Nights in a Barroom* held in the Masonic Hall. She spent long hours, too, reading the English classics of the Seaside and Lakeside libraries which providentially brought the best literature to the world for ten cents. Once she experimented with one of Beadle's novels, which sold likewise for a dime and were then at the height of their popularity, but Elizabeth made short work of this when she discovered what her youngest daughter was reading. Victoria did not mind much, for she had found it boring stuff. She did enjoy, however, the witticisms of Petroleum V. Nasby in the *Toledo Blade*, which David read to her and Elizabeth every night after supper. Often he would read aloud also to them from the *New York Tribune*. He said he took the *Tribune* because of his admiration

for Horace Greeley who visited Hillview on his campaign trip and for whom he voted for President in 1872. His real reason for taking the New York paper was a far deeper one, of which he rarely spoke.

In 1870 across a small river running by a great city there was started a bridge over 6,000 feet long and 85 feet wide, with towers rising 272 feet above the water. This was the famous Brooklyn Bridge. It was to follow every step of its progress in its thirteen years of construction that David Ash subscribed to Greeley's *Tribune*. He did not speak often of his old interest in bridgebuilding, but even Victoria was so impressed with it that years afterward one of the first things she did when she was in New York was to walk across from Park Row to Sands Street. The tragedy at Ashtabula, when the bridge collapsed and the train and its passengers were plunged into the river, stirred David so deeply that as long as Victoria lived she would never go to bed until her train had crossed the bridge there. Sometimes David would read of an engineer whose skill and invention had won him the honor of a government medal or the decoration of a foreign power; and then he would sit for a long time in silence.

"David, are you ever sorry?" Elizabeth asked him once. "Sorry that you gave it all up and came out here? Tell me truthfully."

"No," David answered slowly. "That life we led from place to place was not for a man with a family. No, I'm not sorry; that is, I don't think so."

It was during the dark decade that Victoria first fell in love. She was thirteen years old. On the afternoon in

early autumn when she answered the bell she had no idea that standing behind the frosted star-figured panes of the front door was the handsomest and most dashing young man Hillview had ever known. She never forgot the glory of his tightly fitting blue army uniform or the jaunty daredeviltry of his light gauntlet gloves, the first she had seen. Never in her life was she able to quite realize that the hero who stood on the Ashes' front porch was only a young army lieutenant just out of West Point who was probably more than a little scared of his first job. Forever in her memory he remained the epitome of adventure and romance come straight from the outside world where life was great and glamorous and all quite different from prosaic and commonplace Hillview.

The young officer was Lieutenant Ezra J. Calhoun, who had come to teach Military Science and Tactics at the college. He had stopped at the Ash home in the hope that in the comfortable-looking house so near the campus he might find quarters.

After the end of the Civil War Congress had passed a law authorizing the detail of regular army officers to colleges and universities of certain rank, and also furnished them with cannons, muskets and other equipment. With his usual perspicacity, Crollon's President Parr hurried to Washington to secure from General W. W. Belknap, Secretary of War, the first such detail for Iowa. The arrival of young Lieutenant Calhoun as first commandant marked the beginning of military training at Crollon which lasted until the Spanish-American War, when the government withdrew from colleges all

officers and arms. Instead of trim cadets at drill, there were padded football heroes and unclothed track runners and baseball and basketball flourished on the campus and in the big new gymnasium.

"Do you remember how differently the boys used to carry themselves instead of shuffling along the way they do now?" the older persons of Hillview would ask each other. What each was regretting secretly in his heart, however, were the days when handsome young Lieutenant Calhoun brought adventure and romance to a prairie town starved for life and living. They recalled with a kind of sad relish the college Commencement in 1876 when Jeff Nash, the student cadet captain, had both his hands nearly destroyed in setting off a cannon salute; they spoke of the morning the town was startled at daybreak by the congratulatory cannon fired in honor of the birth of little Lucy to President and Mrs. Parr, now living in Hamlin's Folly; and most of all they talked of the day Lieutenant Calhoun was too intoxicated to command the boys at drill and of the public apology he made to them later after morning chapel. To be drunk was low and disgraceful for ordinary folk, but in this shining young officer it was only a daring misstep to be condoned and forgiven and secretly admired; for the whole town and college, as well as Victoria, loved the charming Lieutenant Calhoun, who, in turn, loved the pretty town girl Anna Etting, who had been graduated in Jim Ash's class.

Then Hillview forgot and only the elderly woman who had been the girl Victoria remembered handsome young Lieutenant Ezra J. Calhoun as she passed under

the elms of the old Finch house where he had found quarters. Only she wondered if the trap door was still in the back parlor where it was whispered he had hidden his cache of liquor under the floor. Nobody but Victoria and the ghosts recalled the sad face of pretty Anna Etting Calhoun when she came back to visit her family from the army posts where her husband was later stationed, or the shock that came to Hillview when word was received that both were dead only a few short years after their marriage.

Now that Victoria is gone, no one remembers at all but the ghosts, for little lives and loves and deeds and dreams that once mattered so mightily have a fashion of fading soon to nothing.

The darkness of the seventies lightened as the decade drew to a close. Changes came to the Ash household and to the world. Elizabeth's mother died in '78, to be followed shortly by Robin, who went at last to seek the great perhaps of Rabelais. Jim was earning money in the East and gave promise of future achievements. Victoria was not only at college, but was one of the star pupils at the Crollon Conservatory. Her father was so proud of her that he bought her a new piano—not an upright as she had expected, but a big grand piano of shining black ebony with lyre music rack and pedal support.

Hallie and Jim had been the students of the family, but Victoria, although no dullard, never won any scholastic honors. Almost before she had learned her multiplication tables, however, she was reading at sight any piece of music she could lay her hands on, improvising,

playing by ear whatever caught her fancy. Her parents were delighted, although Victoria herself always felt a secret shame that she was not "smart" as her brother and sister who had been graduated from college cum laude. Before she was eighteen she was the unofficial accompanist at weddings and funerals, and official accompanist of the Glee Club. An old program—then spelled programme—shows that music lightened the high thinking of Crollon's students. The program, dated Tuesday Evening, March 13, 1877, and entitled "Crollon College Junior Exhibition," reads:

Music	
"Self-Interest"	
Loo A. Spear . . . . .	Tipton, Iowa
"Pyramids Not all Egyptian"	
Martha A. Smith . . . . .	Mt. Vernon, Iowa

Music	
"A Phase of the Eastern Question"	
George M. Ryan . . . . .	Waterloo, Iowa
"Ideas and Productions"	
Charles L. Root . . . . .	Lyons, Iowa

Music	
"National Inception and Decay"	
Charles A. Pollock . . . . .	Clinton, Iowa
"True Culture"	
Charles E. Moore . . . . .	Mt. Vernon, Iowa

	Music	
	"The Silent Sublimity of Life"	
James G. Eberhart . . . . .		Shrewsbury, Pa.
	"Ancient Forests and Modern Fuel"	
Asa W. Berryman . . . . .		Mt. Vernon, Iowa
	Music Glee Club	
Tenor . . . . .		J. M. Camp, Jr.
Soprano . . . . .		Miss Kate Tiffin
Alto . . . . .		Miss Fannie McClung
Bass . . . . .		M. T. Harmer
	Miss Victoria Ash, Pianist	

"Poor Mel Harmer," Victoria said as she looked over the old program. "He was never happy unless the club sang 'Genevieve.' He named his daughter for the song."

The days may come, the days may go,  
But still the hands of Mem'ry weave  
The blissful dreams of long ago.

Any daughter of Elizabeth Ash was bound to have a proper respect for clothes, but Victoria's early public appearance developed a clothes consciousness in her that was unusual and which stayed with her always.

"I was up on the platform where everyone saw me," she explained to her daughter. "They saw not only dress but my hair, my shoes, everything. I learned that clothes are one of the most important things in a woman's life.

She should have good clothes if she has to go without bread and butter to get them. Well—maybe they're not that important, but I'm not sure but what they are. Because a woman thinks a great deal about her clothes doesn't mean that she is a vain self-centered hussy. It means that she has proper self-respect. She owes it not only to herself but to her family to always look her best. Your friends may know you for what you are, but strangers can only judge you by the way you look. And above everything else, Landis, it doesn't pay to buy cheap clothes."

"Never buy anything cheap," Robin had cautioned his daughter long ago.

"They aren't finished well ever, on the inside, and you know it even if nobody else does and because you know it, it does something that undermines your confidence in yourself. Do you know, Hattie Merritt has been dead thirty-five years," she mused, "but I can remember yet how beautifully finished all the inside seams of her dresses were."

"You'll be planning what kind of steamer coat you'll have when you get ready to go over the River Styx," Landis laughed.

"Well," her mother retorted, "if there is a better looking one on board, it won't be my fault."

Slender young Victoria planned and practiced and played the accompaniments for a town and college that knew no radio or victrola, and in 1881 was graduated from the Crollon Conservatory. Before her graduation she had been offered a position as teacher of piano in the college. The summer before she began her work

was one in which the sewing machine was rarely idle in the Ash home.

The three years Victoria taught in the college were crowded, happy ones. Elizabeth unbent as she had not since she was a girl. There were parties and song and laughter in the Ash double parlors. Elizabeth saw always that the young people were well fed before they went home. Perhaps it was her culinary contributions to the good times that caused the Ashes' white picket fence to be spared on Halloween when every other fence in town was laid low.

For Victoria's pupils there could be no compromise with scales and exercises. She worked them mercilessly. Slovenly and careless work of any kind she could not tolerate, whether at the piano or over the dishpan. She had the gift of enormous enthusiasm which was contagious, and as a result her pupils covered themselves with glory; that is, with one exception.

The exception worried Victoria very much. He was a good-looking chap with a brilliant flair for execution when the mood was on him. He refused to practice, however. When Victoria upbraided him, he would only laugh. Once or twice he even tried to make a little love to his young teacher.

"I shall have to report that you are making no progress with your work," a discouraged Victoria told him finally.

"Oh, I'll show progress soon, I promise you," he replied. "Don't report me for a week or two anyway."

Victoria never reported him for before the week was over he had left town on the late train. His one stipulation

to the faculty had been that he be allowed to get away before it was learned by his fellow students that he had been a wolf in sheep's clothing that resourceful Dr. Parr had hired from a Chicago detective agency to find out who had set fire to the intimate little buildings which served the college in the days when modern plumbing was unknown. It was all very well for Crollon boys to steal apples in Dr. Pease's orchard and tie the Mott calf in Professor Wynn's classroom during the night or let loose a flock of pigeons during morning chapel, but depriving Crollon of one of its most necessary adjuncts was too much to go unpunished.

When Victoria found out the hoax that had been played on her, she was furious. "President Parr had no right not to tell me," she said over and over. "I worked so hard with him and all the time he was making fun of me."

Victoria was happy; or almost happy. She could not quite forget the letters that grew more threatening each month from the publishing house in Chicago from which she had ordered a quantity of music. She had not realized that the bill would be so large. It was unthinkable that she confess her extravagance to her conscientious parents. Finally she wrote to Jim in desperation and told him her plight. He sent her the money for the music by return mail and also enough to pay her dentist bill which he suspected—and rightly—was lying unpaid in the new walnut desk her father had given her last Christmas.

Her fright over the music bill had scarcely passed when there came another about the dry goods store in

Cedar Rapids from which she had bought the material for her dress to wear at the concert given by the faculty of the Conservatory. It was the finest dress at the concert. The material, which had cost twelve dollars a yard, was claret-colored faille, so stiff that "it could stand alone," as the clerk pointed out, and was made with an underskirt whose front panel showed an equally heavy velvet with tiny stripes of rose, green and the same claret shade of the faille. "I won't write to Jim again for money," Victoria told herself. "There must be some other way out." So she went to President Parr and told him she was not getting enough money and that in all decency the college should raise her salary. They did. The dress was paid for.

After the dress came the embarrassing bill for the garnet pin and earrings to match which she had given Elizabeth for her birthday. This time she could not ask President Parr for a raise in salary. The situation was so desperate that she wrote to a church in Council Bluffs and offered to give a concert for them there on a percentage basis. The church was making every effort to raise the mortgage and the ladies sold the concert tickets with zeal. The garnet pin and earrings were paid for. Neither Elizabeth nor anyone else ever knew the anxious hours put in by Victoria before the jeweler had his money.

The financial workings of her mother's mind always puzzled and worried Landis. All her life Victoria was scrupulously honest, but she was a born adventurer and a gambler. David and Elizabeth Ash planned and saved and finally bought and paid for the necessities of existence

and the niceties of life which they felt their position in Hillview demanded. Victoria bought first and paid afterward. Her philosophy was that necessity was the mother of financial invention and that, if she owed money for anything, she would make herself evolve some plan by which she earned the money to pay for it. She spent more money in her lifetime than most women in Hillview ever even dreamed of, but she made herself make it.

To Victoria always no brook was too wide to jump; no gate too high to climb. To her a closed door was a challenge; an open one, a wide opportunity. Like Captain Richard Ash, who had come to America on the *Arbella*, she was ever ready to set out to conquer a new world.

She had a vision which made her a greater woman than her mother had ever been or than her daughter could ever be.

Victoria's gay vivacity brought her beaux aplenty. There was the good-looking chap who owned the dry goods store on Main Street and young Professor Blakely who lived at the Guild Hotel where all the bloods of the college stayed if they could afford it, and Tom Tildsley who went from his father's farm to Rush Medical after he had been graduated from Crollon. She liked Tom best of all; so well, in fact, that she forgave him the romantic theft of one of her new brown three-quarter length French kid gloves and kept its lonesome mate for years in her chenille-embroidered glove box as a memento. It was not until the coming of Robert King,

however, that she really fell in love.

Robert King was thirty-five years old when he came to visit his parents who had moved to Hillview some years before. The Kings, now living in what had once been the Rutledge house on Depot Street, were a Quaker family who originally settled in Maryland, later went to Morgan County, Ohio, and thence on to Iowa. They owned several farms around Hillview which Nathan, the father, ran and on whose income they maintained a prosperous standard of living. "The Quaker mantle always rested very lightly on Nathan's shoulders, I'm afraid," was the verdict pronounced by his redoubtable cousin, Judge Milo King, in later years. "It was his older brother Samuel who was the real Quaker of the family." Yet it had been the gentle Samuel who ran down the main street of Richmond shouting "Hurrah for the Union!" when the news came that Fort Sumter had been fired on. Had it not been for the wily Nathan, the two brothers who had gone there on business would never have escaped from the city.

Robert King was much older than any of Victoria's other young beaux. It had been nearly twenty years since he and three other Quaker boys had defied youth and faith and run away from home to join Company E, 78th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Robert had put the written numeral sixteen inside his shoes and answered "yes" without a quaver when the enlistment officer asked if he was over sixteen. In March of 1864 he joined his regiment at Vicksburg. The night before his sixteenth birthday in May he spent in an orchard far from home. Already the glamour of patriotism had faded for the

quiet blue-eyed Quaker boy. By summer when he joined Sherman's command at Big Shanty, Georgia, he knew war in all its horror. On a mercilessly hot August morning he lay with two bullets in him before Atlanta. Under the broiling Southern sun he remained there all that day and the long night following. When the Confederates came in the darkness, they took as prisoner the wounded soldier on his right and robbed the dead man on his left of the diamond ring on his finger. Robert, too, they thought was dead. When it was dawn the Union stretcher-bearers carried him to the rear, where he lay for two days before one bullet was taken from his body and the other was left to torture him from time to time until he died. Then he was taken to Marietta in a wagon and after ten days on to Rome, where he remained in a field hospital until September. In nothing but his underclothes he was finally sent on to Marshall, Tennessee, and in the late autumn home once more to the gray-garbed folk from whom he had run away with so high a heart only a few short months before.

Robert King's brief youth was over. The sensitive Quaker lad had seen sights of war which made return to the old ways impossible. By eighteen he was out in the world far from home again and earning his living.

He possessed a combination of qualities which were inherent both in his father, the shrewd Nathan, and in his uncle, the quiet, sweet-tempered Samuel. Disillusioned but not embittered, he set out to make a place for himself. In the years that followed he accumulated a fair amount of money and a vast sense of loneliness which could never again be assuaged by return to the

life of the little Quaker community where he had known a happy boyhood.

To Victoria, Robert was a sophisticated man of the world. He had been to big and distant cities. He spoke with the unconscious superiority of an urban knowledge far beyond the narrow confines of Hillview. It was, however, his quiet charm and gentle manners that attracted her from the moment she met him. He, in turn, was enchanted with her vivacity and alert mind. She drew him out as none ever had before. For years he had tried to forget the war, but in his calls upon her in the Ash parlor he talked again of the dark days before Atlanta and the dreadful pillage he had seen there. "When there was nothing else they could do to ruin them, they would pour turpentine into barrels of flour," he said of Sherman's men. "I have seen them empty a keg of molasses into a beautiful rosewood piano in some fine mansion. There was nothing they left undestroyed." Yet to him the Southerners were always "Rebels" and the Boys in Blue had been the saviors of the nation.

Robert talked to her, too, of the great world outside Hillview. He told her of Mackinac Island and the beautiful Dells of Wisconsin where he had spent vacations; of Joe Jefferson and how the whole theater cheered for ten minutes when the lovable Rip first came out in rags and tatters with children hanging all over him, and women in the audience cried when Dame Van Winkle banished him from the kitchen as he asked if she would drive him out like a dog; of lovely Clara Morris as Miss Moulton in *East Lynne*; of Barnum's famous mystery clock which showed no apparent con-

nexion between the works in the clock, encased in a mahogany base trimmed in velvet and gold, and the clear glass dial mounted atop an apparently empty vertical glass tube.

"I believe the secret lies in the use of glass for some of the moving parts of the clock," he explained in his low even voice one Sunday afternoon as they sat on the stile leading to *The Folly*. "I think the glass on which the face is mounted is in reality two cylinders, one within the other. The inner cylinder, which you can't see, of course, is revolved by the clock mechanism in the base. A small bevel gear mounted on the inner cylinder turns a shaft running at an angle through the right-hand dial supporting arm. The shaft ends in an endless gear which meshes with teeth cut in the circumference of a clear glass disk mounted directly behind the face on which are painted the figures. The single hand of the clock is fastened to the movable glass disk."

He told her, too, of Barnum's *Mlle. Lotta* and her partner with whom she did the famous blindfolded act. "Both of them were blindfolded, you know," Robert said, "and there they were swinging by their hands and feet and toes and doing all sorts of hair-raising stunts. The climax came when *Mlle. Lotta* turned a somersault in the air and was caught by her partner while he hung by his feet. Some of the women in the audience fainted when that part of the act came. I didn't feel any too good myself, to tell the truth."

Victoria enjoyed most of all his stories about Chicago to which she had never been, except for that brief walk with her mother on their return from the East at the

time of Lincoln's funeral. Robert told her of the city before the fire when Crosby's Opera House with its famous paintings was the talk of the town, and of Kinsley's Restaurant within the opera house. "I hate to think that it's all gone now," he added. "But the new Palmer House is so much finer than the old one that there isn't any comparison.

"Victoria, would you like to go to the Palmer House on your honeymoon?"

Victoria's intuition had told her this was going to happen. She knew she wanted to marry Robert more than anything in the world; but she was silent.

"I've even thought of the house in Columbus I'll buy for us to live in," Robert went on. "You'll like it in Ohio. You'll like the men I work with in the bank there and their wives. I know I'm years older than you, but I believe we'll be truly happy or I wouldn't beg you to marry me. For I am begging now, Victoria. It seems as though I've been lonely all my life without you. Oh, dear girl, I can't go away unless you go with me."

"Rob, why don't you open a bank here in Hillview that is all your own?"

"I haven't enough money for that," was Robert's surprised reply.

"You can get it, though, Rob. I can help you in the bank and save a man's wages. And I know everybody and how good their credit is. Rob, let's do it."

It was not until hours afterward that a bewildered Rob realized that Victoria had not told him she would marry him. Victoria never realized it; she was too happy hugging to herself the realization that she was going to

marry the only man she had ever been in love with, and that between them they were going to give Hillview a bank that Hillview, the Ashes and the Robert M. Kings would be proud of. "I must look well every day when I'm helping Rob in the bank," she planned. "Clothes are going to be most awfully important for me when I'm downtown there all the time. Everybody will be coming in."

It was characteristic of Victoria that it never entered her head that ladies of 1884 did not work in banks, even their husbands'. Women's rights had never interested her, although a group of women had founded a women's suffrage association in Iowa as early as 1869. All her life she looked a little askance at feminine leaders and mistrusted them as strong-minded females. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Anna Dickinson were lecturers in Hillview, and none other than Carrie Chapman Catt came from Iowa. Victoria dismissed them from her mind with a shrug of the shoulders. She was too busy proving woman's equality with man to go about the country talking about it.

**1884–1900**



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HE issues of the eighties were currency and transportation, just as they are today or in any other decade. The presidential election of '84, however, gave an especial fillip to politics, for the contest between the sturdy Grover Cleveland and the silver-tongued James G. Blaine was bitter and venomous. Elizabeth read with horror that the Buffalo bachelor drank with prospective voters as he harangued them from beer barrels in saloons, and with even more horror that he had had a child by a widow named Maria Halpin. She applauded fervently Dr. S. D. Burchard with his "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" alarums. David, as a good rock-ribbed Republican in a state where Democratic Presidents have sometimes had difficulty in finding even a lukewarm Democrat to appoint as village postmaster, denounced with heat the renegade Mugwump Republicans who had gone over to the enemy. Robert King said philosophically that a Democratic victory would bring hard times to the country.

Victoria did not say much of anything; she was too busy and too happy. How could she worry over a possible Democrat in the White House when Rob had given her a pair of diamond earrings as well as a carat diamond

ring for an engagement present?

In May Robert went back to Columbus to wind up his affairs preparatory to marriage and opening the Hill-view bank. Victoria sent him many letters, all of which he saved carefully. In one she wrote:

My Own Dear Rob,

I can only tell you over and over how lonesome I am without you, and how I do so want to see you. Today has been rainy and cold and my walk to my pupils at the Chapel disagreeable, so I enjoy sitting by the fire this evening. Evenings seem the longest of all to me and I often imagine what you are doing. Sometimes I have you reading—sometimes smoking—sometimes—alas, calling on some young lady. Almost a week before you can come back to me and whatever will I do until you come. I expect you will stop right here and say something about somebody's being very foolish, but I can't help it.

Have had my usual trials today with my pupils—my smart-y boy, my crying girl, my grass widow. Poor Miss Kling is ill. Has not been able to give her lessons for two days. Am going down to Mechanicsville Saturday to help her get up a class in music. You know Emma Bennett lives there, so I hope to be successful for Miss Kling's sake.

I simply couldn't go to Hattie's wedding tonight without you, Rob dear. Perhaps I am missing a very grand affair. About fifty are invited. There are to be four bridesmaids. Hattie's dress is white lawn skirts and satin basque. Rob, I did want to go so much and wear my cream silk. You will call it vanity, but if you had been here, I should have been so happy at the wedding in my new dress. Do you know, I couldn't help looking for you this evening, even when I knew you couldn't possibly get here. And even after the train from Chicago was in, I combed my hair and partly dressed to be ready in case you came.

Let me tell you this—that when we are married either we'll have a very, very quiet wedding with only the relatives—not one outsider—or else a very, very swell affair such as no one here has ever seen. Just remember that.

Be a good boy and come back as soon as you can, Rob dear. I was only joking about being jealous. I have more confidence in you than in any one else in the world.

With love and many, many kisses,

Very truly yours,

Victoria

Robert and Victoria were married on Victoria's birthday in early September. The night before Elizabeth sat up frying chicken and making sure that all the previously prepared dishes were quite in order in the buttery, before crawling wearily to rest after midnight. Victoria, her face covered with pieces of soft white flannel soaked in fresh milk, had been put to bed early by Hallie who had come to bring her three handsome petticoats with the most beautifully and elaborately scalloped and embroidered edges Victoria had ever seen.

"Oh, Hallie, you shouldn't have taken all that time when you have so much on your hands with the children and everything," Victoria exclaimed.

"Well," Hallie laughed, "it's worth it to get you married. To tell the truth, I've told Reuben many a time that you've been within two shakes of a lamb's tail of being an old maid. It does seem a pity, Vic, that you aren't having anyone but us and the Kings. I had a grand big wedding."

"Yes, I know, but Pa is giving me a hundred dollars in gold and oh! I'm so happy all over, Hallie! If only Jim

and his new wife could have come. But aren't the forks and the after-dinner coffee spoons with the rose pattern they sent the sweetest things you ever saw?"

The next day was what David called a scorcher. Victoria looked longingly at her old lawn dress in the closet as she put on her wedding gown of heavy changeable silk. "It is handsome, though," she told herself as she struggled with the many buttons fastening the tight basque down the front. And after the noon ceremony was over and the Ashes and the Kings and the Cranes had eaten Elizabeth's dinner off the best gold-band Haviland china and finished their coffee poured from her stately silver service, in spite of the heat Victoria donned her voluminous wrap which matched the gown and put on her adorable little hat of white cactus braid with a crown of the same changeable silk. The Guild Hotel hack had not been considered elegant enough to take the bridal couple to the afternoon train, so Dewitt McClellan, who had just purchased a shining new carriage for \$225 and a spanking team of bays worth \$600, was engaged for the purpose.

It was while they were waiting for Dewitt's carriage that Elizabeth reminded them again that they must not fail to see the great tabernacle in Chicago where Moody and Sankey held their meetings. "They say it will seat ten thousand people," she told them. "Perhaps you'll be fortunate enough to find a meeting or a sacred concert being held while you're there, and you can go."

"Chicago won't look to you much like it did to me when I came west first in fifty-six," David contributed. "There were about a hundred thousand people living

there then. It was only four years before that the railroads, the Michigan Central and the Michigan Southern, had reached the city. I've heard how only fifty years ago they held a grand wolf hunt in 'thirty-four, and one bear and forty wolf pelts were the trophies of the day. Now it's the bears of the Stock Exchange who are raging and howling in Chicago, and the only wolves are those that walk around on two feet.

"Did you say you planned to put up at the Palmer House, Rob?"

"Yes," Rob answered. "I thought Victoria would enjoy it more than the Sherman House or the Grand Pacific Hotel. I've always liked the Palmer House, although I've never stopped thanking my lucky stars that I checked out of it once when I did. I stopped there overnight the week it opened in 'seventy-one. Only four days after I left Chicago and just thirteen days after the hotel opened its doors for the first time it was burned to the ground in the great fire. As soon as the debris was cleared away, Mr. Palmer started to rebuild. He said that the new hotel would be opened as soon as a single room was finished and ready, so there never was a formal opening after the fire. It took them two years to rebuild the hotel entirely.

"I suppose I was lucky to have missed the fire, but it would have been a great experience to have gone through. There hadn't been any rain of consequence for over three months before, and when the fire started that Sunday night in October it swept like a fury over the wooden buildings and wooden sidewalks and wooden pavements. It lasted until Tuesday morning, when there

wasn't anything left of all the business section. Every bank, every insurance office, hotel, theater, railway depot, law office, most of the churches and all but one wholesale store were burned to the ground. They say sixteen thousand houses went, too, and over a hundred thousand people hadn't any homes or clothes or money or food. The insurance companies lost nearly eighty-nine million dollars. It was—"

"He's coming!" It was Jonathan, Hallie's oldest boy who had escaped after the repast and had been performing outside on his new bicycle with its big front wheel and smaller one behind. "Golly, his rig's a dandy, all right. You should see Mrs. Dr. Bennett staring from behind her curtains like all get-out."

"You must promise to tell me every single thing you see," Hallie whispered to Victoria as they all made their way to the front door. Hallie gave a little sigh as she kissed her sister.

"I will," Victoria promised, as she threw her arms around Hallie's neck. "Every single solitary thing, darling."

Dewitt McClellan and his equipage had arrived.

Not many hours later Victoria realized how hard it was going to be to fulfill her promise to Hallie. "Oh, dear, it is all very grand," she whispered to Rob as they followed the bellboy to their room in the soft-footed elegance of the Palmer House. "No wonder Lady Dufferin said she would like to have these furnishings in her own home."

"Just wait till you see the city tomorrow," Rob re-

plied. "It's not much like Hillview."

Rob had thought he knew Chicago, but with Victoria's big brown eyes beside him the next day he saw for the first time a thousand things he had missed. All Victoria's life her capacity for enjoyment was enormous; on her honeymoon it knew no bounds. She dragged Rob here, there, everywhere. They went not only to the Moody and Sankey tabernacle so they could tell Elizabeth about it, but also to the United States Customs House, the Post Office and to the Chamber of Commerce opposite City Hall Square. For hours they stood before the frescoes of the latter with their allegorical pictures representing the trade of the city, the great fire and the rebuilding. They visited the vast ornate Exposition Building of iron and glass with its frontage of eight hundred feet on Michigan Avenue and marveled at its dome a hundred and sixty feet high and sixty feet in diameter. They went to Lincoln Park whose broad acres had served as a refuge during the raging fire. They spent a whole day in the fashionable shops along Washington and Dearborn streets selecting a sealskin sacque which Victoria decided privately was even finer than her mother's.

To Rob's dismay, Victoria insisted also on visiting the stockyards.

"I don't think you'll like it," he said doubtfully. "It isn't any place for a woman."

"I know I'll like it, and it will be all right for me to go as long as I'm with you," Victoria answered. "I want to know about places like that, too, Rob. I'm interested in farms as well as fashions, my dear. With the bank it's

our business to learn all there is to know about farms and everything connected with them. Please tell me you'll take me in the morning."

Of course, Rob did take Victoria in spite of his misgivings. In all the glory of her changeable silk she made her way on his arm down the mile of the stockyards' Broadway with its cattle pens on either side. She visited the hotel for the cattlemen and the Cattle Exchange and the bank solely for the cattlemen's use.

"How many cattle did you say are killed every day?" she asked an attendant.

When he gave her the figure, she made a memorandum of it on the back of the envelope she begged of Rob. Later he saw her making note also that the capacity of the yards was 25,000 head of cattle, 100,000 hogs, 22,000 sheep and 1,200 horses.

"I like to know things like these. I'm afraid I was born with the curse of an inquiring mind," she told Rob as she caught him smiling at her. "You're probably sorry already you didn't marry that little butterfly you used to call on in Columbus."

That afternoon Victoria was in an entirely different mood. She asked Rob if they could go for a drive along Drexel Boulevard which was devoted entirely to pleasure vehicles. "I want to feel very, very elegant," she explained. So they drove among the fine carriages in which were grand ladies carrying the tiniest of parasols and gentlemen wearing Dundreary whiskers and the heaviest of watch chains.

Each time that they returned to their hotel she marveled anew at it and its 750 rooms. She had saved care-

fully the folder which contained the menu for "dinner at 12:30 o'clock, Wednesday, September 10," the day after their arrival. The bill of fare differed but little from those of the best hotels of today, except that pie was stressed among the desserts and roast prairie chicken was included among the entrees.

"Look," Victoria had whispered, "Rob, I believe they designed the cover especially for us."

Regardless of whether or not they had recognized the importance of the honeymooning Robert M. Kings, the management had decorated the outside of the menu with very fat and naked winged cupids who were apparently huntsmen also since they were dragging fallen deer, rabbits, geese and other fauna unknown, as well as fish.

"Oh, it's all too wonderful," Victoria murmured as she snuggled her hundred pounds of verve and vivacity on Rob's broad shoulder. "I can hardly wait to tell Ma and Pa and Hallie all about it. You don't mind because we're going to live with them, do you? They think you're wonderful, and honestly, Rob, I wouldn't feel at home living in any other house in Hillview."

"No, Victoria, I don't mind if that's what you want," Rob answered. "I don't want anything in the world but to have you happy."

The Elegant Eighties were a transitional period. The old leisurely ways were gone, while the new days of nervous action were still in the future.

The telephone, the invention which resulted from the contrivance Alexander Graham Bell made in an en-

deavor to improve the hearing of his deaf sweetheart, was in existence, although it was a crude instrument. The telegraph, too, was in an early stage. Electric lights were a great novelty, and continued to be considered unreliable even as late as 1896, as testified to by the fact that at Duse's debut in *Camille* at the New York Fifth Avenue Theatre the gas footlights and other important lights were kept burning dimly so that they might be utilized instantly if the electric current failed.

Aside from politics, the country was concerned with such diverse topics as the discovery and rescue of the survivors of the Greely Arctic Expedition; the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty which was formally accepted in Paris in 1884 and unveiled in the New York harbor in 1886 before a million spectators; the Sullivan-Mitchell fight with its tremendous gate of \$6,000; cremation, against which Henry Ward Beecher was thundering; the affairs of Adelina Patti and Lily Langtry; Oscar Wilde who arrived in January, 1882, in bottle-green overcoat and sealskin cap and who carried culture and his sunflower and velvet breeches even to Sioux City, Iowa; oleomargarine, against whose alleged impurities *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* devoted its leading space week after week.

*Leslie's* and *Harper's Weekly*, both widely known as weekly newspapers, supplied the pictures which the daily newspapers lacked. These weeklies were filled with pictures engraved from photographs or sketches drawn by the artist on the scene. There may have been no electrocution snapshot of a Ruth Snyder, but anyone who believes that pictures of corpses are a recent development

should glance over the weeklies of the eighties to see their numerous gruesome drawings based on current news stories.

A look at the periodicals of the time dispels also any idea that high-pressure advertising is a late development. Men and women who slept with tightly closed windows took comfort from this cheering and compelling advertisement:

Consumption!  
I have a positive cure for this.

A country which had never heard of a sane Fourth could celebrate with the assurance of Pond's Extract, which advertised on July 5 that it cured burns from fireworks and was also "infallible for prostration by heat." "R.R.R., a great blood purifier, will cure all chronic diseases" was another assurance given the reader. A canny canning concern which found its salmon would not sell because of its whitish color announced that it was "Positively Guaranteed Not to Turn Pink." The same soap floated then that floats now and Castoria was something children cried for and Schlitz was "The Beer That Made Milwaukee Famous." The word "sex" was taboo except in the dictionary, but Lydia Pinkham's motherly face was everywhere. Astrologers, faith healers and fortune tellers all bought space to tell of their wares. Cigarettes were looked at too askance for newspapers to accept advertisements for them, but cancer cures were a different matter entirely.

The Pure Food and Drug Act of June, 1906, was far away. If people wished to medicate themselves for in-

digestion, asthma, kidney trouble and venereal diseases, that was their own affair. In the eighties many a country newspaper with its journeyman printer would have gone to the wall had it not been for the patent medicine cures. Concerns advertising these met their bills with cash. This often meant salvation to ye country newspaper editor whose readers were likely to pay subscriptions with a cord of stovewood. Local merchants who went in for extensive advertising were the exception, and it was whispered that they were resorting to this final expedient only to avoid bankruptcy.

During the middle of the decade an unrecognized menace to American boyhood reared its ugly head in the apparently innocent *St. Nicholas*. All was well as long as such authors as Louisa M. Alcott, H.H. (Helen Jackson), H. C. Bunner, Frank R. Stockton, W. D. Howells, Susan Coolidge and Celia Thaxter were its only contributors. Then in November, 1885, came Frances Hodgson Burnett and R. B. Birch. Between them, they concocted Little Lord Fauntleroy and his curls and velvet suits and lace collars, and thereafter no youngster with a doting mother was safe in his accustomed habiliments. Not even James Whitcomb Riley, then coming into prominence, could counteract with all his knowledge of boys the pernicious Fauntleroy influence.

Meanwhile the older generation, callous to the sufferings of the small male, fell in love with James S. MacKaye's *Hazel Kirke* and the new girl-babies were named for her. The grownups went also to hear *Pinafore* and hummed its airs along with other songs of the day. One of the hits of 1884, the year Victoria was married, was

"Always Take Mother's Advice," whose opening lines told you

To you in this world she is dearest,  
At your downfall her grief is severest.

The downfall of damsels occupied a prominent place in songs of the day. "She May Have Seen Better Days," "The Moth and the Flame," "Fallen by the Wayside" and "With All Her Faults I Love Her Still" were favorites.

It was against this background that Victoria moved as a bride and lived the first years of her married life.

Victoria went straight from her honeymoon to work with Rob in the new bank. For the next six years she was a ship in full sail and an army with banners. Five days a week she was in the bank, and on Saturdays she went to Madrid to give piano lessons to private pupils. On Sunday mornings she played the organ in church and on Sunday afternoons she drove with Rob in the country looking over the farms owned by customers of the bank or in which the bank was otherwise financially interested. Often after the bank closed for the day they drove across the railroad tracks to Rob's own farm which he had bought from David whose health was no longer robust. If it were near traintime, Victoria would beg Rob to wait at the depot to see the passenger engine roll in with its brass drive wheels painted bright red and a pair of deer horns over the headlight. "You'll never grow up into an old married woman," Rob teased her as he tweaked her ear and pretended to frown. "I most cer-

tainly don't want to," Victoria answered. "It would be too stuffy."

She helped to organize the ladies' Apollo Club with its musical evening once a month. For the Fourth of July parade she decorated the bank float on which Rob rode proudly with a safe, and the float took a prize. She made Rob a George Washington costume and a marvelous wig for a waxworks in which he was the Father of His Country. She even made a fly net for Major, Rob's big Morgan, when the harness shop had none that fitted him. In her odd moments she knitted and crocheted afghans of intricate design and made beautiful silk blocks for a patchwork quilt which she featherstitched together. She was not even downed by arthritis which crippled her pitifully for months the year the unobtrusive Benjamin Harrison and the very obtrusive Baby McKee came to Washington. When the doctor told her she must go to bed and have complete rest, she laughed at him and had Rob carry her to the buggy and drive her back and forth to the bank every day.

"I do declare, Victoria, you can lick your weight in wildcats every time," her father said with admiration.

"Well, I'm not going to give in and be a cripple the rest of my life," she retorted. "There's too much to do and I'm having too good a time doing it."

In September of 1888 Rob went to a G.A.R. encampment at Columbus while Victoria ran the bank alone. Every night after she had put on the time-lock and balanced the books, she would write him of the day's business. Letters like the following can be appreciated only by someone who ran a country bank very long ago:

Dear Rob,

I have just turned on the time and finished the balance, a copy of which I am enclosing for I know you will want to see it, no matter how good a time you are having. It has been a big day for exchange. I sent \$213.66 to Chicago and over \$1,300 to Cedar Rapids. Long brought in a draft for \$629.33. Was in Chicago with his cattle yesterday. He wanted the money on it but said when he went out that he supposed it would most of it come back into the bank soon as he was going to pay bills with it. It has been a busy day, but not much profit. Perhaps I ought to have ordered a \$1,000 down from Cedar Rapids, but I guess I will wait until Monday. The Jeffries draft for \$700.10 came this A.M. and I sent Mr. Jeffries a card to that effect. Dr. Pringle sent for his balance of \$175.10, which I mailed him. He is going to make a small loan and needed what he had here. The Burge tax receipts came from Marion. James Edmonds and Elmer Fuchs both paid their notes this morning. There is a letter from Bradstreet's about Nottingham. Mr. Johns sent for his balance—\$3.50—"by return mail." Mrs. Meade tapped on the window just after closing time and wanted me to cash a cheque for her for \$3.

I dread tomorrow because it will be Sunday and lonely without you. I think Ma and I will take a drive in the evening. We were out with Major last night and he only jumped once and did no harm. Eugene Guild is rounding up the boys in the band to give a serenade for Ella and Louis next Wednesday night after their wedding.

That's all my news. Goodbye, dear boy. Have a good time and accept many, many kisses from your loving

Victoria

Rob was concerned about the bank in his absence as Victoria had known he would be. From Columbus he wrote her:

Dear Victoria,

I meant to tell you if you have to send any money by express, do not pay the charges there. It is cheaper to let them pay at the other end. I am very anxious to hear from you as to how everything is going.

I wish you could be here and see the sights. It is the grandest encampment ever held, they tell me. Gen'l Sherman, Mrs. Grant and Mrs. John A. Logan were on the Grand Review Stand today. When our Colonel came in the boys just picked him up and carried him around and he cried like a baby.

When I arrived last night I found thousands of the Boys in Blue walking the streets with no place to sleep. I am staying with the James, but Joe Coates from Marion couldn't find a lodging until four o'clock in the morning and then he had to sleep on a mattress on the floor in a room full of people.

Well, dear, I got the ornaments for your coat at Field's in Chicago. I had quite a time trying to decide which you'd like best. I do hope they're right.

With all my deepest love to you always, dear girl,

Ever yours,

R. M. King

Time tricks us in strange ways. Years pass and life seems sane and safe and stable. Then time becomes a tornado, twisting and destroying with incredible speed all that the years have built up. The last ten years of the last century wiped out Victoria's past life almost as completely as the tornado which David and Elizabeth saw in '57 wiped out the little town of St. Mary's down by the river.

In the late spring of 1890 the district attorney, James Cartwright Ash, summoned from the East without warning by telegraph, sat through long nights by the side of a

walnut bed with a high headboard and counted the strokes of the clock in the chapel tower as it struck the quarters and the hours. After the fifth night, at the first twittering of the birds, Jim knew that he would have to sit there no longer. David, whose cold had turned into pneumonia, was dead. They carried him first to the red brick church which he had built so long ago at such cost and then on past his schoolhouse to the cemetery on the green hill. The first mound was in the Ash family plot and an Elizabeth whose back was still unbending was suddenly an old woman who sat with folded hands.

Fortunately Elizabeth's hands could not remain idle long, for before David had been gone a year Little James, Victoria's son, was born. When Victoria first realized that the baby was coming, she was dismayed, although not unhappy. What would Rob do without her at the bank? she wondered. When Little James was born, however, it was as though all her years behind the counter and over the books had never been. She forgot her work, her music, even her friends. All her boundless energy and enthusiasm was concentrated on her child. She was suddenly and completely all mother; Little James had, in fact, two mothers, for Elizabeth lavished upon him a demonstrative affection which she had never permitted herself to show her own children. She had disputed heatedly with Victoria over the naming of the baby, insisting that he be christened David. His Grandfather King felt that it was only right that he be called Nathan for him. Robert had naturally a secret hope that, since he was the baby's father, his son would bear his name. Victoria had her way, however, and the boy was named

James for the brother who had bought her the neat doll baby out of his first savings and paid her girlhood bills and written her betrothed that he would curse him if ever he failed to cherish his sister. The baby was always called Little James, not James, even by the customers in the bank who asked after him of his proud father.

A life-size portrait of Little James, made when he was almost two years old, shows him in a dress of candy-stripe pink and white French flannel, with big leg-of-mutton sleeves and a ruffle of lace about his neck. He was a good baby, serious and gentle, with a charming smile which Victoria coaxed from him on every possible occasion. Robert and Victoria and Elizabeth all knew that when he grew up he was going to be a banker and make the Hillview bank finer than anyone could dream; but Victoria's baby was destined always to be only Little James.

When he was two years old the same pneumonia which had taken the elderly David took the little child. Once more James the older made a sad trip westward to follow the dark hearse to the hill beyond the town. It was winter and cold as January can be only on the prairies. Before the casket lid was closed for the last time, Victoria lifted her baby once more in her arms and put him in his little woolly coat and tied on his bonnet with the ribbon ruche around the face.

"It is so cold there on the hill," she moaned over and over afterward. "He is out there all alone in the cold."

"He isn't there. He is with God," Elizabeth said soothingly, although her own face was contorted with silent grief.

"God—what does he—" cried Victoria in a tone that was between a sneer and a cry. It was the nearest she ever came to blasphemy.

Victoria would not let anyone touch Little James's playthings which were where he had been playing with them in the bow window of the dining room the day he had first taken cold. There was his flannel dog with the shoebutton eyes and his building blocks and his music box which tinkled when he turned the little crank and his half-filled savings bank which bore the proud legend "Compliments of the Hillview Bank."

"Wherever he has gone he misses his playthings," Victoria would say. "Wherever he is they won't know how to take care of him. Well," with a dreadful bitterness, "I didn't know how to take care of him, either. I let him die."

"Victoria, it wasn't your fault. No one is to blame. Everything was done for him," Rob tried to comfort her.

For the first and last time in her life all Victoria's defenses were down. She was a stricken and tormented soul for whom there seemed no peace. Finally Rob decided that a return to her work in the bank might help her. She agreed to go one afternoon, but after she had been there an hour she put on her hat.

"Perhaps I could stand it if the day weren't so bright and beautiful," she told Rob. "The sunny days are the hardest to bear. It's days like this that I used to wheel him through the campus and all the girls stopped to smile at him. I'm going home, Rob."

As she walked up the street she saw a display of baby highchairs in the window of the Cunningham furniture store. She pushed open the door and confronted John Cunningham with blazing eyes.

"Don't you know you have no right to have those baby highchairs in your window?" she demanded in a high shrill voice. "Don't you know there shouldn't be any more baby highchairs in the world?"

"Why, Mrs. King," a bewildered Mr. Cunningham began. Then his face softened with sudden pity. "Let me take you home, Mrs. King."

With desperate effort Victoria regained control of herself. "I'm sorry, Mr. Cunningham," she said. "I'm sorry and ashamed. I don't want you take me home. I'll be all right now." She walked hurriedly out the door.

On the first day of May President Cleveland had touched the golden key that set in motion the machinery for the Columbian Exposition, which the country called familiarly the World's Fair. Robert and Elizabeth believed that a trip to the Fair would distract Victoria's mind, so she and her mother and Hallie went to Chicago to see the sights of the Court of Honor and the White City and the Midway. (But not Little Egypt.) They visited also Chicago's first steel skyscraper of twenty-two stories, the Masonic Temple, which had been built two years before. Elizabeth wanted especially to see it because David would have been interested in it. He had stoutly maintained the structural soundness of steel when New York's first twelve-story skyscraper, the Tower Building on lower Broadway, was denounced in the press of 1888 as a House of Cards.

At the Fair they saw the prize gooseberries and the exhibit of the Krupp munitions and people kissing the Blarney stone in the Irish Village. They mounted the turret atop the cold-storage building and stood on one of its platforms to view the entire grounds of the Fair. The building's flagstaff bore proudly the inscription: "This building is absolutely fireproof." Nothing warned them that from these same platforms scores would soon jump to death to avoid the yawning flames below. They marveled at the latest gowns of Felix and Worth and the fur exhibit in the French Pavilion where one section of the floor was covered with a hundred and thirty-five river-otter skins. They lingered over the pottery and porcelain in England's Victoria House and were served by an English barmaid in the White Horse Inn.

"Isn't it perfectly disgraceful that the Infanta Eulalia of Spain refuses to meet Mrs. Potter Palmer because she says her husband keeps an inn?" Hallie asked as they paused for a moment before a two-wheeled hose cart on which was a little gasoline engine used for pumping water. They paid no particular attention to the young man who was earnestly studying the model. They did not know that beside them stood revolution, nor that young Ford would return from the Fair to Detroit with inspiration to build a gasoline engine of his own. Even he could not have foreseen that in ten years he would complete the organization of a company that in the next thirty-five years would produce more than 27,000,000 cars.

When they viewed the MacMonnies Columbian Fountain in the Court of Honor, they were speechless.

This was not surprising, for it was the largest and most amazing fountain in the world. Atop sat Columbia on the Barge of State. Time steered at the helm, the Arts and Industries were oarsmen, and all were drawn by the sea horses of Commerce. Horns of Plenty poured their bounty over the gunwales, while babes and mermaids disported themselves in the spray.

Hallie would have stood before the fountain for hours in admiration but Elizabeth led them away to see the paintings of Delacroix, Corot, Millet, Monet, Rosa Bonheur, Raphael, and Alma-Tadema in the Palace of Fine Arts.

Victoria showed no more enthusiasm here than she had elsewhere at the Fair. Even the French gowns had failed to hold her interest. "Let's ride in a gondola," Hallie coaxed desperately. "Or would you rather be carried around in a sedan chair?" Victoria shrugged her shoulders.

Only once in all her visit to the Fair did Victoria's eyes light up with their old eagerness. It was when she saw the steam-powered Ferris wheel on the Midway Plaisance.

Ninety-two per cent of the Fair's visitors rode in the Ferris wheel. It was to the Columbian Exposition what the Eiffel Tower had been to the Paris World's Fair in 1889. It was 250 feet in diameter and had thirty-six cars with a capacity of 2,160 persons. Rob had read to Victoria of how Mrs. Ferris, the inventor's wife, had encouraged her husband in its construction and the brave part she had taken in its launching. When Mr. Ferris was obliged to be absent on the day it was first tested, it

was she who made the trip. In spite of a high wind Mrs. Ferris made the trip bravely, and later had as a reward a telegram from her husband asking God's blessing upon her. As was fitting, it was Margaret Ferris who presented George Washington Gale Ferris with a golden whistle which he blew to start the wheel on its first official trip.

"I'm going up in it," Victoria announced suddenly as she watched its slow revolution.

"Oh, I don't know if it's safe," Elizabeth started to protest. Hallie shook her head behind Victoria's back.

"Yes, let's, Vic," she urged with pitying eyes. "It will be a thrill."

Then Victoria's enthusiasm left her as suddenly as it had come. "No," she said indifferently. "You go, Hallie, if you want to. I'm not interested in thrills any more."

Elizabeth bought a beautifully bound set of large reproductions of the paintings and sculpture of the Fair. Hallie took home Bohemian glass. Victoria bought nothing and went away with eyes as anguished as when she came.

It was not until Landis was born after Christmas that Victoria was herself again.

A great many years later at New York penthouse parties Landis would surprise her acquaintances by declaring herself a Quakeress, and say with serious face that wars and rumors of wars could not concern her, since to fight was against her religion.

"Just a little Friend to all the world, aren't you?" a smart young man asked. "Then why can't you be a special little Friend to me?"

Often Landis would ask herself how it had come that she was what she was, with Puritan and Quaker heritage. "It must have been the year in which I was born that fixed that," she decided.

In the year of Landis's birth came the famous panic of '93, with its 15,000 commercial failures and 574 closed banks. A cyclone destroyed 1,000 lives in Savannah and Charleston. A terrific storm swept the Gulf of Mexico and killed 2,000 people. Mayor Carter H. Harrison of Chicago was assassinated. Queen Liliuokalani was dethroned by Hawaiian revolutionists. Lizzie Borden was acquitted of the murder of her father and stepmother. Some 27,000,000 people went to the World's Fair and no small proportion of its male visitors went to see Lillian Russell who was playing in the city in *Girofle-Girofla*. Charles K. Harris wrote "After the Ball." The *Maine* was christened and launched. James Gordon Bennett built the New York Herald Building uptown at Thirty-fifth Street and Broadway in New York and the Waldorf-Astoria opened its doors. *Trilby* appeared serially in *Harper's* and feet, shoes, cigars and cigarettes became her namesakes. King George and Queen Mary were married.

"They had a great time getting ready for my advent," was Landis's comment as she reviewed the year's events.

The panic of 1893 did not come spectacularly with headlines as did those of 1873 and 1929. It settled down slowly and inevitably, however, on a doomed land. By '94 factory towns were dead. Scrip was issued by chambers of commerce. Iowa hogs sold below \$2.50 for a hundred pounds and a horse might be bought for \$20.

There was no rain in parts of the state for over two months and the corn crop was only half its normal yield. Armies of unemployed wandered all over the country. One of the most famous of these was that of General Kelly which marched east from San Francisco. Rob discussed over the supper table with alarm the approach of Kelly and his men.

"They say Governor Jackson wants to stop him from coming through the state," he told Victoria and Elizabeth. "That's why he has called all the National Guard companies in the western part to their armories."

It was decided, however, that Kelly and his men should be permitted to pass through Iowa. On a rainy Sunday afternoon the so-called general, striking poses which he considered imitations of Christ on his entry into Jerusalem, rode into Des Moines at the head of a thousand marching men whose only equipment was a tin plate and tin cup. The army was escorted to an abandoned factory outside the city, where it was so well fed that it refused to leave on foot. The railroads would not give it transportation, and in order to get rid of Kelly's "Industrial Army of the Commonwealth," the city finally built rafts and floated the men down the river.

Victoria did not return to work, but she regained her interest in the bank. The baby girl absorbed her time, but never so exclusively as Little James had. She comforted and counseled Rob in the anxious days when every bank, great or small, was on perilous foundations. "When a bank refuses to loan money on a farm or a business that is dead, they talk about the cruelty of the

banks and blame them for hard times," she told him. "And when a bank does loan money on worthless security to appease the clamor, and shuts its doors when it can't meet its obligations, then it is a monster because it has lost the savings of the people who trusted it. You're wrong always, Rob, whatever you do."

Victoria was an economic royalist, although she had never heard the term.

"And all this fuss about the Bradley-Martin ball in New York," she said later when the country and a crusading Dr. Rainsford were in the throes of denouncing the Bradley-Martins for their wild extravagance in a day when workless folk were starving. "The trouble is that there isn't a woman in the country who isn't jealous because she wasn't there and her husband is mad he couldn't get her there, and himself too. People complain because times are so hard nobody is buying anything. Then when these people give a party and the florists sell five thousand roses and three thousand orchids and people buy goodness knows how many silk stockings and yards and yards of velvets and laces and silks and the hairdressers get fifteen dollars an hour for doing the women's hair for the ball, they say it's all a scandal and the Bradley-Martins ought to be put in jail."

"Well, I don't know," Rob began cautiously.

"I do," said Victoria with finality.

Even before the Bradley-Martins had so naïvely and with consequences so disastrous to themselves attempted to do their bit to lessen hard times, the depression was already lifting. The presidential election of 1896 brought cheer to Rob's heart, although he had many an

anxious moment while the thirty-six-year-old orator from Nebraska had the country ringing with his cry that labor's brow must not be pressed down with a crown of thorns nor mankind crucified on a cross of gold. "He's a crackpot if there ever was one," Rob commented, "and the trouble is that the country is full of fools ready to listen to him. The Democrats might better have kept Cleveland instead of throwing him to the wolves because a lot of know-nothings said he sold out to Wall Street when he made the deal with Morgan that saved the country."

One crisp autumn night Rob came in laughing until the tears ran down his cheeks. "I met little Ami Allen on the street coming home," he explained. "He collared me and what do you think he said? He said serious as anything: 'Oh, Mr. King, will the country go to the dogs if Bryan is elected?' I must tell his father not to talk so much politics at home while the children are around."

Little Ami did not have to worry long, for a Republican campaign fund whose size has never been equaled since by either party put William McKinley in the White House with a 600,000 plurality.

"I never would have married you if you'd been a Democrat, Rob," Victoria told her husband after it was all over.

"I'd have married you if you'd been a Populist," was Rob's very satisfactory answer.

Victoria did not wheel Landis long in her carriage with its big lace parasol. Almost as soon as the baby could creep she could walk. "And now the fat will be

in the fire," Elizabeth prophesied all too truly.

For Landis was here, there, and everywhere doing all the naughty things serious Little James had never done. Before she was three she had made a public entrance into Hillview society which has never been equaled. Victoria had taken her downtown to do some shopping, and on her return dropped in at the bank for a few minutes' visit with Rob. "Come out of there, young one. You'll get dusty nosing around under the counter," Rob said, as he picked Landis up and proudly set her in front of him at the teller's window. "Look, how's this for something pretty to play with?" He opened a drawer and gave her half a dozen gold pieces. "Your sex like those pretty well usually."

Landis's delight in the new playthings was short-lived, however, for almost the same moment three hatless, breathless and wild-eyed men burst into the bank. Their equipment was all equally unusual, although in each case different. Jim Bates, the butcher, carried a ferocious meat cleaver which he brandished with dreadful abandon. Reuben Crane waved in each hand a garden rake from his hardware store. Most dangerous-looking of all, however, was Alex Macfarland, the little harnessmaker, still in his apron.

"Where are they? Did they get away?" he cried, flourishing right and left the two wicked buggy whips he carried. "Let me at 'em, Rob," he pleaded. "Don't tell me we're too late."

Landis was utterly transported. She gurgled and smiled and held out her arms to Alex with delighted cries of "Nice man! nice man!" Rob and Victoria and the book-

keeper were literally too stunned to speak.

"Well, we got here as soon as we could, anyway," Reuben told his brother-in-law. "I ran just as soon as the alarm went off."

It was Reuben's reference to the alarm which threw light on the situation. There was a buzzer in the floor under the counter which could throw an alarm into different stores on Main Street. The understanding was that in case of a holdup and Rob was able to reach the buzzer with his foot, the various storekeepers were to come to the aid of the bank with whatever weapons they could command on short notice. In her investigations under the counter Landis had set off the alarm.

By this time the bank was full of people. Fred Stokes made a spirited if belated arrival with a pair of enormous shears from his tailorshop. Jake, the barber, ran in with an evil-looking razor. Attracted by the excitement, even Mrs. Beatty from the millinery shop came panting, although her only weapon was a hybrid bird, half sparrow and half dove, which she had been about to attach to a hat. Only the marshal was missing. He was in the K. P. Hall with some of the boys.

With Landis still trying to reach Alex and cooing "Nice man!" Rob explained what had happened. It was a ticklish moment. He was far from sure that his fellow townsmen would be pleased to have been made ridiculous by a baby girl. Landis saved the day, however.

"All of you's nice men." She smiled. "Come to play with me?"

The psychiatrists say that the first five years of a

child's life put an indelible stamp on character. Landis wondered if this was true, and if so, just how they had affected her. Certainly no child ever knew a world of greater security and love in early years. Her grandmother held her on her lap by the coal burner in the dining room on cold winter days and read her *Fairy Starlight and the Dolls* and Eugene Field's poems. Her father took her on his knee after the napkins were put back in their proper rings and supper was over, and sang "Nellie Gray" and "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching." Her mother made clothes for her innumerable dolls, and Aunt Hallie crocheted bonnets and sacques for them. Uncle James and Aunt Hortense sent her a big dolls' house which stood in the bow window beside her grandmother's music box whose metal disks played "El Capitán," "Monastery Bells," "Airs from Norma," "Airs from The Bohemian Girl," and other tuneful favorites. Grandfather and Grandmother King gave her a white fur neckpiece and muff. On Sundays she had the greatest treat of all—she was allowed to play all afternoon (carefully) with her mother's china-headed Hattie, until the jaunty bird jumped out of his house on the wall and cuckooed that it was seven o'clock and bedtime.

It was on Sundays, too, that she went to Grandfather King's. Landis liked this especially in winter because it was fun to stand over the hot-air register and to go down to the cellar with her grandfather to fix the furnace. There was no furnace at home, nor electric lights. The only electric lights Landis had ever seen were in the auditorium of the Chapel, where they made her think

of stars as she looked up at them far away in the ceiling. There was no telephone at home, either, for the only one in town, "long distance," was in Uncle Reuben's store. The Ash house had long had a bathroom, however, with a zinc-lined tub and fixtures set in heavy paneling of walnut and ash, and a door which had an opaque red glass in it covered with a shade. Landis never knew the reason for the glass, since the shade was always discreetly drawn. Downstairs in the house were carpets to be taken up and beaten vigorously once a year during that dreadful period known as house-cleaning. In the bedrooms was matting. The hall had a hatrack with beveled mirror and a seat which opened and in which was still the heavy gray shawl which David had wrapped about him when he went downtown on cold winter days. Everywhere were rocking chairs—in the dining room, in the parlor, in the bedrooms, on the porches in summer. What has become of that grand American institution?

"We don't even have the same things to eat as we had in that house then," Landis thought afterward as she remembered the old kitchen with the coffee mill in the cupboard and the turkey-wing brush by the stove and clock on its special shelf and the colored print of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair" on the wall. There was hominy and dried corn and chicken dumplings and potatoes baked with the skins off and spareribs and fried mush and watermelon pickles, which were not the pale ones served nowadays in tearooms but were deep green rich with spice; popcorn and molasses taffy; marguerites and gingercreams; black walnuts and hickory nuts; and

a newfangled concoction called mayonnaise. There were oyster stews, too, on cold nights, but these were treats. Landis's husband would admonish her years later in New York never to order oysters on Monday, since they might be left over from Saturday. She would smile to herself and remember the oysters of her childhood which may have been a week from the ocean before they reached Hillview.

If the winters were cold, how hot were the summers! There was no air conditioning, no artificial refrigeration, no electric range or fans, although all over the house were enormous palm-leaf ones which were in constant use. In the hottest months the gasoline stove in the "gasoline kitchen" off the kitchen proper was used. In the back entry was the icebox, covered with an old blue blanket as additional protection against the heat. Constant war was waged against the flies. Victoria would spend hours chasing and swatting them with a folded newspaper, for flypaper was considered something only the shiftless used.

With the summer came the thunderstorms which to Landis were a source of blind terror. The fault was her grandmother's, since at the first clap in the night she would come in her white nightcap and wake Rob and Victoria to insist that they all come to sit upon her feather bed. It was the only one in the house and she believed it to be an island of safety. When the wind came with the storm they were all hustled into the cellar, but not in the part under the piano, lest it fall upon them should the house be lifted from its foundations.

Dinner at the Guild Hotel—Guild was pronounced to rhyme with child—occasionally on Sundays was a great treat which made one feel dashing and cosmopolitan. The hotel of Mr. and Mrs. Guild had held its prestige through the years, pointing proudly to the many distinguished names in its register, including that of Lillian Russell who had visited a sister who taught in the college at the time Victoria did. "Pooh!" Victoria would say when the incomparable Lillian's gowns were the talk of the nation. "I can remember when the Leonard girls from Clinton were making their own clothes." The office and parlor of the hotel were on the second floor, which could be reached by a flight of steps outside from the street. Among other things the office held was a flat-topped stove on which sat a kettle coated with lime. Near by stood a water pail with dipper conveniently attached. The bucket was replenished from the traditional vine-clad well with oaken bucket in the back yard. Opposite the office, the parlor, with its square rosewood piano and flowered carpet and long white lace curtains, was a charming room, however, although people were beginning to condemn it as old-fashioned. The bedrooms, too, with their spool-spindle beds and wide window ledges and small-paned windows had charm, even if the stoves and ever-yawning woodboxes proved a problem for the Guild boys in winter. On the first floor was the dining room where the guests sat at long tables. In the lean-to kitchen at the back Mrs. Guild herself presided as cook—and few hotels have ever had a better chef, no matter how great his name may be in gourmet circles.

Dinner at the Guild Hotel could not compare, however, with a long drive Landis took one Sunday with her father and mother ten miles across the country to Whittier, the little Quaker settlement where Rob had cousins "once removed." Rob explained to Landis that life was every different there from in Hillview. The church service did seem strange, indeed, for there was no regular preaching and folk stood up and talked only when the spirit moved them. A sign on Whittier's general store which announced that ice cream was sold there "every seventh day evening" showed, however, that the Friends were not entirely above the weaknesses of the flesh. Landis found also that the cousins once removed provided themselves and their guests with a greater abundance of rich and elaborate dishes at the noonday meal than she had ever known at home. Victoria commented on the meal later, and added that she wished she could afford as expensive materials as the cousins' wives used for their somber Quaker garb.

There were also trips to Cedar Rapids where Uncle Charlie and Aunt Georgie King lived in a house with a porte-cochere. "I told Charlie I didn't want a house without one," Aunt Georgie explained. Apparently she was a sophisticated young woman, and certainly she was a beautiful one. Landis had never seen such lovely big leg-o'-mutton sleeves as hers, and she admired tremendously the tortoise-shell pin stuck through the Psyche knot atop Aunt Georgie's tawny head. Uncle Charlie's house had a butler's pantry as well as a porte-cochere, and Landis wondered why it was so called and what or who a butler might be. Aunt Georgie proved her mod-

ernity also by introducing Victoria to a new drink called Postum. "It will help those headaches of yours," she insisted. "Just try a cup. You can't tell it from coffee."

"I'm sure I can," Victoria replied dubiously as she took a sip. But Georgie paid no heed, for her mind was off on another track.

"Vic, have you heard about the Cherry sisters?" she asked. "To think that they came from right here in Cedar Rapids and we all thought they were crazy. And now they're on the stage and getting rich. I remember that they said people wouldn't laugh at them forever. Well, they're still laughing, but who'd mind if you made all that money?"

When Victoria and Landis went with Aunt Georgie on the streetcar downtown, it was very exciting. In the stores your purchases were sent away in a little wire basket that ran on an overhead trolley, and when they returned they were wrapped. Some of the stores weren't stores at all, it seemed. Perhaps it was because of their swinging doors that they were called saloons. "'Lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine,'" Victoria quoted as they hurried by one of these sinister places. "Landis is a girl and that's one thing at least I don't have to worry about. Women don't drink, thank goodness."

"I do enjoy being here with you, Georgie, and seeing all the things in the stores," she added as they paused to admire the new coats in the windows of Martin's Dry Goods.

"Yes, I do think we have a nice little city," Georgie answered with a complacency that was shared by all of

Cedar Rapids' citizens. Fortunately for them Carl Van Vechten's *The Tattooed Countess* was still over twenty years in the offing.

Trips to Cedar Rapids were eclipsed by the really splendid journey Landis made with her parents to Chicago. She was fascinated by the hansom cab with its door in the top through which her father talked to the driver on their way to the hotel from the station, and even more fascinated when she saw a big steel cage in the lobby of the hotel. "Monkey! Monkey!" she cried, and was inconsolable when she learned it was only something called an elevator in which you moved up and down.

Rob always took an almost personal pride in Chicago. He knew a great deal of its early history, and when Victoria asked him what the name meant, he went into detail as to its origin. "It's an Indian word that means all kinds of things," he explained. "Sometimes it means a ruler or a god and sometimes a wild onion or a skunk. The first white men to reach here were Joliet and Marquette in August of 1673. Later the French built a fort but all traces of it are gone. An Indian trader and an agent for the American Fur Company named Kinzie finally persuaded our government to build Fort Dearborn in 1804. It was a garrison of about fifty men and had three pieces of artillery. It stood on what is now the corner of Lake Street and Michigan."

"But when are we going to Field's?" interrupted Landis who was bored with this history. When they did go to that famous store she cried bitterly because Victoria would not buy a lavender hat. Rob backed her in

her plea for its purchase. "No," Victoria said. "Little James has been dead only a few short years. I don't want to take off my mourning yet."

Even the trip to Chicago paled into insignificance before the great journey on which she and her mother and grandmother set out in the summer. They went to Chicago and then on, in a stateroom of white and gold, to the East for a visit with James and his wife and their two little boys. Here she found a house bigger than any she had ever seen and servants in trim uniforms and a nursery filled with toys she had never even dreamed of. It was none of those things that she remembered best, however, when she went home again with her favorite colored rag doll Dinah. What stayed then and indelibly in her memory were the hours she played that summer and autumn with her cousins when they were charging with the Rough Riders and she was a nurse with a red cross pinned to the arm of her white dress.

On February 15 of the year Landis took her first long journey away from her prairies, the proud battleship which had been christened the year of her birth was blown up in Havana Harbor. On April 19 war was declared with Spain.

"Remember the *Maine!*"

By another year it was all over and John Philip Sousa marched precisely down Fifth Avenue in New York with 150 thumping musicians. Governor Teddy Roosevelt in Prince Albert on a black thoroughbred horse followed leading Squadron A. The governors of twelve other states rode on horseback or in open carriages with such distinguished New Yorkers as Chauncey M. Depew

and Richard Croker. Admirals Sampson and Schley, Generals Miles and Shafter, the Old Guard and the Fighting Sixty-ninth, sailors, soldiers and marines by the thousands—all passed by, while a million hysterical New Yorkers from Grant's Tomb to the Washington Arch hailed Admiral Dewey tugging at his moustaches as he conversed with his escort, Tammany Mayor Robert A. Van Wyck.

The Vertical City has long been noted for its parades, the climax of which a present generation imagines was reached in that given for Lindbergh when he returned from his transatlantic flight. Those who saw the great parade on September 30, 1899, say that the one held when Dewey came home from Manila far surpassed it.

Possessed as ever in her wars with the Messiah complex, the United States of America felt itself once more the savior of the world. What welcome could be too great for a man who had shot the fleet of Spain the Oppressor into scrap iron within five hours?

The glory of that September day when Dewey came home from Manila neither Elizabeth Cartwright Ash nor Robert King lived to know. Just when Victoria had learned to fashion her life anew and existence once more took on the shadow of stability, it was all swept away from her and she was forced to begin to build again.

In the winter after the trip east of Elizabeth and Victoria and little Landis, James made the saddest return of his whole life to the white shingled house on the hill. His mother, who had meant to him all that

was good and strong and great, had died of that same dreaded pneumonia which had taken her husband and her two-year-old grandson. "It's a curse on our family," Victoria told her brother when he came to her after nearly two days' weary travel from the Senate Chamber in Albany, where he had been sitting with his colleagues when the telegram had summoned him too late. "Are we all to go with pneumonia, Jim?" she asked him pitifully.

James and Victoria had lost the tower of wisdom and the rock of strength on which they had both leaned so many years, but with her mother's death there came also for Victoria an unconscious sense of release and a new freedom. She had told Robert before they married that no other place could ever seem home to her but the house on the hill. What she had not realized then was that while it was her home, it was and always would be her mother's house as long as Elizabeth lived.

Happily and sadly and half-guiltily Rob and Victoria went about making the changes in the house which they had never dared to propose while Elizabeth was alive. They put in a furnace, "hot water because it gives such a nice even heat," and electric lights and hardwood floors of quarter-sawed oak. "I'll never have to caution Amos again about beating a hole through a carpet when he gets it over a root of a tree," Victoria sighed with relief. "Nasty dirty things carpets were, anyway. And how white and clean and easy to take care of the bathroom is with its new fixtures." It was almost as though Rob and she were on a second honeymoon or a newly married couple just going to housekeeping.

Unlike Victoria, Rob kept carefully a two-line-a-day diary. His short and simple entries reveal the man and his life. "Drove to the farm by moonlight. Sweet clover beautifully fragrant." "Went to depot today and helped bring new safe up to the bank." "Shipped pony to James Ash today for his two little boys. Ran and took cushion from telegraph operator's chair last minute so Dandy's tail wouldn't rub." "Went to farm to look after stock so hired man and family could go to circus." Then a different note crept into the shortened annotations of the diary. More and more frequently Rob wrote: "Don't feel well. Can't understand it."

It was Victoria who insisted that Rob go to Chicago to consult Dr. Frank Billings, the diagnostician. Afterward she pondered on a question the great Billings had asked her husband and wondered what he had discovered that led to its asking. "Have you taken a great deal of quinine during your lifetime, Mr. King?" he inquired. Rob replied that he had taken large quantities of it to ward off malaria during the war and that ever since he had used it frequently for colds and other ills.

"I have a wife and child and a business which must be put in order if necessary," he told the physician. "I can stand the truth and I can't afford not to know it. How long do you give me, Dr. Billings?"

"With nephritis such as yours it may be ten years; it may be six months."

What were Robert King's thoughts as he traveled back from the city over the rolling land he loved so well, none will ever know; but when he came home to Victoria and she forced the truth from him, he said with

the sincere and simple faith of his Quaker boyhood: "It is all right. I do not mind for myself. But I must get things arranged for you and Landis."

Quietly but quickly Rob got his affairs in order. The capital of the bank of which he had been so proud was to be increased with young John Sonabocker as its president. Rob had long realized that young Sonabocker was unusual for his years. He had been only a boy when his father, the banker and leading spirit of the little Pennsylvania Dutch community whose nucleus was Madrid to the east of Hillview, had died and left him a large fortune. With a wisdom beyond his years and with all the shrewdness and acumen of his German father, plus an urbanity of manner and a more cosmopolitan outlook that came from years away at school, young Sonabocker had already increased the fortune left to him. "You can depend on John Sonabocker always," Rob told Victoria, and to John Sonabocker he said: "Victoria is a better businessman than I am. Her judgment is trustworthy and unfailing."

Rob had made his plans none too soon. The last summer of his life he lay in his bed in the house with its new electric lights and hardwood floors and waited quietly for the end. "Good girl," he'd say with his sweet smile to young Gail Greenwood in her mannish shirtwaist and tie when she'd make, cheerfully, half a dozen trips a day from the bank with letters and papers to sign and questions for which there was then no telephone by which they could be asked or answered. "No, I won't be back. But you're all going to be all right. Everything is going to be all right."

Rob's funeral was the biggest Hillview had known since the day they led Major Rutledge's horse through the town with stirrups reversed. All day a Guard of Honor from the G.A.R. stood beside the flower-banked casket in the Ash double parlors while everyone from President Parr to Amos the handy man came to say farewell to the man they had come to know and trust. Of Rob's last trip down the Main Street through which he had walked so many times, the *Hillview Hawkeye*, in an issue whose boiler-plate inside pages rehashed the current Dreyfus scandal, wrote: "After services at the house, a procession was formed and marched to the cemetery in the following order: Masons on foot; members Grand Army of the Republic on foot; citizens on foot; relatives and friends in carriages. At the grave the regular ritual service of the Grand Army of the Republic was followed, and the ladies' quartette and the G.A.R. sang 'America.'"

When the letters of condolence from the bankers of the big little cities and the letters from the bankers of the hamlets at the crossroads who had known Rob as a righteous man of business had all been answered, Victoria took up once more the task of reconstructing her life. Her grief was deep, but she was not the stricken woman with anguished eyes who had mourned her Little James. There was work now to do and Victoria was ready to do it. Backed by all her old confidence she faced a new century and a new world.

**1900–1914**



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WILLIAM MCKINLEY, and some said Mark Hanna also, sat in the White House. With the government committed to the gold standard and a high protective tariff, God was in his heaven and all was right with the world. A lighthearted country hummed Flora-dora's "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden," while the merchants and manufacturers and farmers were for once all content.

The new century was daring in its prosperity. Ladies rustled provocatively petticoats of taffeta, or ones with taffeta ruffles even if the tops were made of sateen. Little girls wore Ferris waists. Bernhardt, a grandmother and fifty-six, challenged age and tradition by appearing in *L'Aiglon*. The English actress, Olga Nethersole, and Clyde Fitch, the playwright, flung down the gauntlet to Victorianism with *Sapho* in which the quondam pure-hearted Jean carried a lady of easy virtue named Fanny Legrand up a much-talked-of flight of steps to his bedroom. Brave young lady pianists crossed their arms—and sometimes their fingers figuratively—when they played Ethelbert Nevin's "Narcissus." Substantial gentlemen puffed Coronas, and those not so substantial smoked five-cent cigars. Daring youths indulged in

cigarettes, although everyone knew they were coffin nails. (It was not until ten years later, and after Theda Bara, that the opposite sex ventured an occasional Milo Violet.) No one had ever heard of the decadent orchid, but young men bought their best girls lusty long-stemmed American Beauty roses if they could afford them. Every well-appointed home had an amazing room called a den. Dining rooms had plate rails decorated with hand-painted plates and tankards and steins, although nice people never used the latter for the purpose for which they were intended.

Victoria had a hat trimmed with handsome ostrich plumes. Hortense carried a lorgnette. Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish wore a pearl dog-collar. All three had various gowns with varying lengths of trains. Nick Biddle invariably swung his cane.

Park Row was to newspaperfolk a locality and not a legend. Reporters drank their liquor without any nonsense, and did not come from schools of journalism. The Spanish-American War had made Hearst or he had made the Spanish-American War. In either case, yellow journalism was coming into its own. Charles Chapin was cracking his whip as the Simon Legree city editor of the *Evening World* under Pulitzer's Golden Dome; none guessed he would write "30" to his career thirty years later in Sing Sing. Gentlemen of the Fourth Estate spent their leisure moments in Perry's in the World Building, at Andy Horn's near Brooklyn Bridge, at the Astor House horseshoe bar or at the bar of the Hardware Club in the Postal Telegraph Building, at Dolan's and Hitchcock's, at the "Dutchman's" in Wil-

liam Street or at Dennett's where gilded religious texts hung beside "watch your hat and coat" warnings. The pousse-café was a fearful and wonderful drink.

When the Fourth Estate was not occupied in these strongholds of good fellowship, it wrote—often still in longhand—of the activities of James Hazen Hyde with his Vandyke beard and of Canfield the gambler and of Anna Held's milk baths. It wrote also of the lives and loves and deaths of other less illustrious ladies and gentlemen who pedaled bicycles and reclined in hammocks and thumped guitars and played pianos draped with hand-painted scarfs. Mr. Etaoin Shrdlu also appeared elfishly in the news from time to time, just as he does today and has since the introduction of the linotype machine in 1885.

It was all the land of the story with the happy ending, and the hearty breakfast which included sausages and buckwheat cakes, and an Elbert Hubbard who had just written *A Message to Garcia*.

Life was wonderful for everybody, including Anthony Comstock, who had discovered the verse about the little red hen.

Tod Sloane won the Futurity. Berry Wall and others rode in hansom cabs. But even on Iowa roads, which Hamlin Garland described as "either bitter and burning dust" or "foul and trampled slush," a few horseless buggies with dashboards and whip sockets defied death and public opinion. "Get a horsel" the small boys taunted when there were breakdowns. Farmers swore because of the runaways they caused and promised profanely that they would see laws passed in the State

House at Des Moines that would keep such menaces to life and limb and property off the public highways. The new contraptions chugged and wheezed on their uncertain ways, however, while rural schools were dismissed to watch their passing. Even in Hillview, mild-mannered Mr. Buser, the photographer, revealed hitherto unsuspected tendencies and startled the town by driving an electric.

And Hillview had telephones! A local company had been formed and stock to the amount of \$500 subscribed. The "central" building was insured for \$400 and the equipment for \$1,150. For the twenty-five wall telephones, there were two operators who received \$40 a month. For this they were expected also to make all repairs and extensions. The switchboard was operated only from 6 A. M. to 10 P. M. on weekdays, and on Sundays from 7 to 10 A. M. and 2 to 6 P. M. No one needed to telephone at any other time, since all were supposed to be at church. Landis always had difficulty in recalling numbers, but long years afterward when she had talked casually from London to New York and New York to California, she could still remember that the number of the Hillview meat market was 60, and the grocery store was 95.

Hillview had kept abreast of the times in other ways. Cement walks began to replace the old wooden ones through whose cracks pennies and nickels and dimes and quarters and half dollars (and sometimes even a big round silver dollar) found their way. Current for the electric lights installed recently in many of the houses was available every night until midnight, and in winter

was obligingly turned on again at five o'clock in the morning. Mains had been laid for the city water. There were other new bathrooms besides the one in the Ash house, and Halloween was never again so much fun for the boys. There was no sewerage system for many years to come, however, and typhoid continued to take its yearly toll. Main Street had a new restaurant on whose window was the legend "Merchants' Café" and the initiated had a great time laughing when the uninitiated called it the Merchants' Calf. There was even a new kind of doctor called an osteopath who had his office in his own house instead of over one of the stores. There was a new church, which held services in the parlors of various members. "Mamma, what are Christian Scientists?" asked Landis, who had imagined hitherto that all persons were either Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Catholics, or heathen on India's coral strand.

Most incredible of all was the breathless whispered confidence of the little Sonabockers that their father had locked himself from prying eyes in the library and actually smoked an experimental Sweet Caporal. Landis feared for her playmates, since who could tell but what John Sonabocker might turn into a cigarette fiend, and everyone knew what that meant.

In spite of all these innovations, neither love nor money could have bought a bottle of vintage champagne nearer than Chicago, although it was no trick at all for a farmer doing his Saturday night trading on Main Street to buy a cow bell, a twenty-gallon wash kettle or a calf weaner.

Springtime in a prairie town did not mean bock

beer. It meant sulphur and molasses, pieplant sauce, and a good mess of dandelion greens. In winter the little kiss-me-quick vestibules were put up outside the front doors, and the long-legged underwear came out of the moth balls.

It is needless to add that in all seasons in Hillview and elsewhere ladies' stockings were displayed only once a week, on Monday mornings, on the clothesline. This was no loss to the Casanovas, since they were generally shapeless black cotton articles of apparel guaranteed to obscure the perfect right and equally perfect left of a Frankie Bailey. Tights were a different matter. Ask Junior to take Grandma to a night club and then get Grandpa to tell you about Della Fox.

In 1900 even ladies in Hillview had their moments, however. The town had its Mrs. Lessing. Apparently Mrs. Lessing was an attractive but perfectly respectable widow who had moved there recently with her two children whom she planned to send to college. From appearances it would have been difficult to imagine anyone who smacked less of the demimonde. That went to show that you never can tell. Jezebel's first cousin can hide behind widow's weeds as well as the next gal.

Landis was sitting on the floor of the back parlor looking at the pictures in the big books of art which Elizabeth had bought at the World's Fair. She had pored over them many times and longed for a change. Perhaps her mother would let her go over to Mrs. Stone's. She wanted to look at Niagara Falls and Pike's Peak and other wonders of town and country through

the stereoscope on Mrs. Stone's parlor table. Privately Landis considered the Stone parlor much more elegant than her mother's. Beside the stereoscope was an impressively bound volume of Meredith's *Lucile* made richly puffy by stuffing under the leather. Also on the table was a large pink shell with beautiful pink insides. If you held it to your ear, you could hear what the wild waves were saying. There was a fascinating gilded love seat shaped like the letter S, and in front of it was a white bear rug. In the window a sword fern trailed its greenery over a fearfully and wonderfully made bamboo stand. The crowning glory of the room, however, was the curtain which hung in the doorway opening onto the dining room. It was made of pieces of reed strung together with intervening beads. When it tinkled in the prairie breezes the listener was transported to all the witchery of lush tropical moons, palm trees, and dusky grass-skirted beauties. Through this exotic hanging one glimpsed in the dining room a useful and exciting piece of furniture which served a double purpose. It was a folding bed. "Poor Joe Stone," was Victoria's frequent comment on her neighbor's deceased husband. "He died in the sideboard."

Landis was about to leave the more restrained atmosphere of her own home for the thrilling diversions of Mrs. Stone's when the doorbell rang. Before she could escape, Victoria brought Mrs. Johns into the front parlor. As befitting an elderly woman the caller wore a bonnet with a quivering jet ornament. Her black nun's veiling dress delicately exuded Florida Water rather than Jockey Club which she might have

worn had she been younger. Landis had no love for Mrs. Johns. She did not wish to become involved in even a passing conversation with her. She was trapped. Perhaps if she were quiet her mother and the visitor would not know they were not alone.

"Have you met Mrs. Lessing?" she heard Mrs. Johns inquire, and then presently persist with another question: "How does she strike you, Victoria?"

"She seems a nice woman," her mother answered. "She has promised me an almond-filling cake for the Ladies' Aid market on Saturday."

"Well, of course, that may all be," Mrs. Johns replied in a voice heavy with skepticism, "but I must say that I was surprised at what I heard about her. Do you know that—"

The little pitcher that was Landis was all ears, but it did her no good at all. Mrs. Johns had lowered her voice to a mysterious whisper. She could hear no more until Victoria cried in horror: "I never heard of such a thing!"

By the next morning Landis could stand it no longer. When her mother was tying the plaid hair ribbons on the ends of her two long braids she said:

"Mamma, I was in the back parlor when Mrs. Johns was here. I didn't come out because she always grabs me and makes me sit on her lap."

"Well, I wish I hadn't had to come out either," Victoria replied, "but you know how she used to pester your grandmother and I seem to have inherited her."

"Mamma, what was it she whispered to you about Mrs. Lessing?"

Victoria finished the smart bow she had been tying before she answered. "Well, it was a funny thing," she said finally. "Personally I doubt it. You know you don't have to believe all you hear."

"Yes," Landis interrupted impatiently, "but what did she say?"

"She said Mrs. Lessing never washed her face."

"Never washed her face! How does she keep it clean?"

"She puts some kind of grease on it and then wipes it off. Mrs. Johns' daughter told her she envied her her lovely soft skin and Mrs. Lessing said that she had it because she never used soap and water."

If Mrs. Lessing's respectability were doubtful in Hillview in 1900 because she used cold cream, public opinion would have deemed that a Helena Rubinstein or an Elizabeth Arden was certainly sired by Satan.

The ladies who stood in front of the washstand splashers depicting Turkey-red ducks in Turkey-red ponds scrubbed their faces with soap and water, drying them briskly with a towel afterward. When they took off their pillow shams on which were embroidered "Good Morning" and "Good Night," no cold cream smothered their features. Perhaps an actress like Lillian Russell went in for nightly beauty rites, but it had been a long time since she was nice little Nellie Leonard whose father ran a newspaper in Clinton, Iowa.

Nobody had ever heard of a cleansing tissue, although one read that the Japanese had the strange habit of using paper handkerchiefs which they later discarded. The Japanese were a wonderful little people even then, but none realized it.

Elizabeth's mirror of black plastic had borne the legend around the glass: "Give back smile for smile and frown for frown." It was not expected to reflect visages bedecked with paint and powder. Of course, every house had a kitchen and every kitchen had cornstarch, and if you used it with discretion no one could be sure. Some adventurous ladies had found out also what could be done with the homely beet. Perhaps they had daringly learned this from the beauty secrets of Lola Montez as told in pamphlet form by her former maid. These were available to all who sent either coin or stamps.

Of course, times do change, and in 1900 Victoria would have spurned the cornstarch subterfuge. She used Bourjois' Prima Violeta Poudre de Riz which she ordered specially from Chicago. A faint film of this and a hundred strokes of her hair with the brush after she had put on her combing jacket were her only concessions to the quest of beauty. She was worried because her hair was so thin. Perhaps she had better buy a switch. Mary Dobbs had had to have hers cut when she had typhoid—poor thing. Although it curled naturally in little ringlets all over her head, Mary did look strange with that short hair. Victoria sighed as she remembered all the crusts of bread she had eaten in childhood in a vain effort to make her own hair curl. She rejected curl-papers as too unprepossessing, but each morning she used a curling iron which she heated on a little alcohol lamp.

It was not until Landis was sixteen and wore a hobble skirt that the feminine sex carried Dorine compacts in their purses. That was the year she longed loudly for an aigrette to wear in her hair at parties, but her mother

said she was much too young. The hobble skirt seemed very daring until she had a letter from her friend Dorothy in the East. Dorothy, whose clothes were always as new as now, had bought a dress with a slit skirt on her last visit to New York. She wrote also that Roger and Gallet's lipstick was wonderful. She had bought a white one, of course, but they said that for some reason the red ones were much better for chapped lips. One of America's greatest industries was rapidly marching forward to lead the women and girls of the country downward along the Primrose Path that leads to the Everlasting Bonfire.

Martyred Mrs. Lessing in 1900 had been the luckless weather vane that proved which way the wind was blowing. The night of Mrs. Johns's visit Victoria applied her cake of buttermilk soap less confidently than usual.

After all, Marie Lessing did have a beautiful complexion.

Once more Victoria was in the midst of life and living. Every day she went to the bank and worked over the books or at the counter under whose glass were the photographs of Landis and the little Sonabockers. "You're the only woman I'd ever have in business with me," John Sonabocker told her. "Heaven only knows what Landis would know about a bank," she replied. "She'd hate it. She can't even do her arithmetic problems. If Little James had lived—"

She turned and walked quickly into the vault.

Nearly every day she went also to the farm where she was carrying on the valuable herd of black Aberdeen

Angus cattle Rob had bought. When a friend suggested that this might be out of her sphere, she retorted, "I know too much about cattle to be a nice female who calls a bull a gentleman cow!" When she had cattle sales and other breeders came from as far away as Omaha, she took them all to town in a hack for the Ladies' Aid to feed. In this way she killed two birds with one stone. The men had an excellent dinner and the Aid made money.

Busy as she was at bank and farm, the church took up no small part of Victoria's time. She was continually devising schemes for the Ladies' Aid to hold church suppers and waffle dinners and markets in merchants' windows and stereopticon lectures and concerts and fairs and bazaars whereby money would be raised to lift the mortgage on the new church.

David's simple and beautiful red-brick church in the Christopher Wren tradition had had to go. "Why?" Landis asked afterward as she viewed critically the large limestone edifice with its flood of bright sunlight and light-oak pews and cheerful colored-glass windows which Aunt Hortense had insisted made her think of a theater. "Oh, the old church wasn't big enough. You know that, Landis," her mother explained. "We didn't have any basement for the Ladies' Aid Society or dining room or kitchen or that fine room back of the auditorium we have now with alcoves for the Sunday school. We just couldn't manage with the old church any longer. And then the Presbyterians had built such a fine new church the year before—and, well, you see how it was."

It was not long after the new church was dedicated

that Landis had an experience there which made a mark on her childhood and perhaps on her whole life. One Sunday after she came home from Sunday school she told Victoria that she must have a ribbon to tie on her especial little chair in the church kindergarten. The teacher had asked that all the children bring ribbons. "And please, mamma, could I have a lavender one to match my new lavender French gingham?" she asked. Victoria got up and returned presently with a wide ribbon of a lovely shade which she had had years before on a hat. "I'll press it and it will be good as new," she said. "It will make a beautiful big bow for your chair." Landis was delighted with it, and so was the kind-faced gray-haired teacher when she tied it on for her the next Sunday; but on the following Sunday it alone was gone from the bows on the little group of chairs. Someone had taken it.

"But why, mamma?" Landis asked Victoria when she came home crying. "I never did anything to anyone to make them steal my ribbon."

"I suppose some other child just slipped back and took it because it was the prettiest in the room," Victoria dismissed the episode. "Never mind, I'll get you another one." "But why did they take my ribbon?" Landis persisted.

"Oh, they were jealous because your bow was prettier and bigger than theirs," her mother explained. "Don't think any more about it." Landis did think more about it, however, as she lay awake in bed long after the nine-o'clock curfew had been rung from the schoolhouse tower. She could have understood and forgiven the theft

of her ribbon if someone had taken it because they wanted it for themselves; but in the back of her six-year-old mind remained the conviction that it had been taken not so much because some other child wanted it as because the unknown culprit had wanted her not to have it. It was her first impact with the spitefulness of human nature and it left her hurt and bewildered. So, too, must the puzzled Romanoff princesses have felt when they encountered that final dark fate which a Bolshevik regime meted out to them.

One fine summer morning when the dew still lay heavy on the wild roses on the country road banks Victoria and Landis started out briskly with the pony team and the smart carriage with rubber tires and wicker body which James had sent them. They were going "across the river" to look for "a girl." The girl would be, of course, a Bohemian—or Czechoslovakian, as she would be called in the days after 1918. In those days the republic of Czechoslovakia was undreamed of.

There had been Bohemians in Iowa before the Civil War. The great influx of foreigners had not come to the state, however, until 1870. In that year the legislature created a state commission to promote immigration. A specially prepared pamphlet entitled "Iowa the Home of the Immigrant," written by A. E. Fenton, was translated into many languages. Steamship companies and railroads co-operated with an eye to business. The majority of newcomers to Iowa were Germans and Scandinavians. There was, however, a scattering of immigrants from other countries, including Bohemia. All the

servants in Hillview—for there were servants there now—were recruited among the strange folk from across the sea who had settled on the less desirable farm lands on the other side of the river. Here they formed a community of their own, still holding to their own ways and customs, with their own little country Catholic church, and managed somehow to obtain a living from their precariously perched fields. They were thrifty and industrious and ingenious, with a keen sense of humor and fine natural feeling for beauty and music, while always underlying all was a deep Slavic melancholy which made for a high suicide rate among them. Many had acquired savings by this time and Victoria had come to know the Zingulas and the Krobs and the Novaks and the Verbas and the Dvoraks and the Svobodas and Croftas and Koldas and the Beneshes from her place behind the counter in the bank. She talked and joked with them and went occasionally to their funerals with their big brass bands or, as one of the guests of honor with the John Sonabockers, to their weddings where year-old babies sucked pickles and drank coffee while gay accordions made the feet tingle and old ladies with flowered kerchiefs on their heads danced with rheumatic old men; but she never came quite to understand them as Landis did, for Landis had held communion with these people from her earliest days. When the fat old Bohemian woman in watermelon-colored crocheted sacque in the Old Ladies' Home said she had been a countess in the old country, Victoria smiled with the others. Landis knew she was telling the truth. Yet the Anna whom Victoria and Landis were to find that day among

the hills was to remain one whom Victoria loved all her long life.

There had been Bohemian girls in the Ash home before the coming of Anna, but they had been transitory and none like this tall fair big-boned girl with clear gray eyes and soft-toned speech and large capable hands. Anna's family were greatly respected by their own people. Her father played the organ in the little stone church with its delicately tinted images of Joseph and Mary and the Babe. Her brother-in-law was the banker in the tiny Bohemian town this side of Iowa City. Anna herself had attended the Crollon preparatory academy for a term while she worked in the house of President Parr. She knew the plays of Shakespeare and Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* which her father had read aloud in Bohemian after supper in the kitchen. It was here, too, that he had told his children of the beautiful Empress Elizabeth whom he had seen once in Prague and of the dark and secret deaths that came later at Mayerling.

"I'll be lucky if I can get her," Victoria told herself as the ponies trotted along. "Mrs. Parr says she is an unusual girl. I'm willing to pay her as high as three dollars a week."

Victoria was successful in getting Anna. Although in less than three years she left the Ash house to marry the burly young Bohemian of her choice, she made a lasting impression on both Victoria and Landis. During those years she read aloud to Landis everything and anything she could lay her hands on, from her mistress's *To Have and To Hold* to *Editha's Burglar*. She did not spend all her spare time in reading, however. Often in the eve-

ning three or four other Bohemian girls who were her friends and who worked also in Hillview homes would come to visit her and all sing together in her room. They had notebooks in which were copied the verses of their favorite songs and often they would sing everything from songs their parents had brought from the old country to "After the Ball" and "Coon, Coon, Coon." There was one about some yellowed letters that Landis loved and tried again and again to recall, but never progressed beyond the words "In a little rosewood casket." She was sure the casket contained the letters of one loved and lost, for Anna and her friends had been very, very solemn while they sang it, just as they had laughed hilariously while they sang of the coon whose color would not fade.

When Anna left to be married she had her picture taken in the sheer white dress and veil which Victoria had helped her plan. The photographer enlarged the photograph and for many years it held the place of honor on the walls of his studio. The face foretells the strong wise woman Anna would become and the mother she would be to the children whose chances she planned to be better than her own.

There are no Annas now in Hillview nor anywhere in that part of the country. The Bohemians who have become Czechoslovakians own department stores in Cedar Rapids and large blocks of stocks in the mills there where once they worked and those who still live in the hills across the river have fine farmhouses and servants of their own.

The Annas made this possible.

For the first time in her life Landis was lonely. Her King grandparents were dead and she knew no children of her own age except the three little Sonabocker girls in Madrid. During the day she was happy playing with her dolls in the upper hall or driving with her mother to the farm or making "calls" on elderly women who had been friends of her Grandmother Ash. Often in the evenings, however, Victoria was obliged to go back to the bank to work. As long as Landis could stay with Anna she was content, but the black moods of the Slavic people would often come on the girl and she would lock her door and leave Landis to her own devices. Presently a blind and unreasoning terror would come upon the child. The dark corner in the upper hall would suddenly turn into the hiding place of a nameless monster. Behind the curtain lurked a hundred clutching hands. The shadows on the ceiling took on horrible shapes and meanings. A cold sweat would break out on her. Her throat contracted so that it was difficult to swallow. She realized that her mother had left her not from choice but through necessity. She did not feel neglected or abandoned. But she did feel the gripping terror of unknown things. When she could endure it no longer, she would go to the new telephone and call her mother at the bank to ask her if she could come home soon. Victoria would always come, although she did wish the child could wait until she had finished her work. "What's the matter with you, anyway, Landis?" she would sigh. "I have so much to do and you know Anna is always right here where you can call her." She never understood and Landis felt it was no use trying to explain.

It was all different soon, though, for Landis was to go to school. For several years Miss Kate, the regular school kindergarten teacher, had come to her on several days each week, as she had also to the Sonabocker children. Now it was decided that Landis had outgrown Miss Kate's kindergarten instruction. "I don't like to send you to the public school," Victoria told her, although she was in reality talking more to herself than to the child. "Yet I never knew a child yet who didn't go to public school who didn't turn out to be an odd one." So Landis went to the brick schoolhouse at the other end of town.

It was fun and she loved it, yet even from the beginning she sensed that there was something wrong. In winter the other little girls wore kitty hoods knitted by their mothers out of gray angora wool, whereas on weekdays she wore a red bonnet of heavy corded silk which came from Best's in Chicago, and on Sundays a very grand pink one (to be worn with her best brown coat with lace collar) that her mother had ordered from De Pinna's in New York. When she managed to escape from hoods, she had a sailor cap like the little Sonabockers' for school, and on Sundays in winter a beaver hat with long ribbon streamers down the back and a leghorn in summer of the same model. The other girls at school wore tam-o'-shanters, which they began soon to stuff in front with paper so they stood up like Gibson girls' pompadours. Landis would eye her flat sailor cap with disdain as she envied her companions their towering headgear. Even her dresses were unlike those of the other children. No one else at school wore Peter Thompson sailor suits with high-neck dickies and knotted silk

ties and stars on the corner of the collars. Landis wore them for many years, as on Sundays she wore cloth-topped button shoes with patent-leather bottoms. Even the hair ribbons tied at the end of her two long braids were wider and heavier than those of the other little girls. Instead of feeling a sense of superiority, Landis felt one of inferiority. She was different from the others and she did not like it. She did not belong.

No one ever lived who was less of a snob than Victoria, yet it was she who thwarted many a budding friendship between Landis and her schoolmates. "My goodness, you mustn't go home again with Agnes to play after school," she'd say. "The Dennisons are a shiftless sort." Edith and Nora and Janice she approved of, but Landis longed sometimes for newer and more adventuresome companions. It was the same at parties as it was at school. It was fun to play games and sing "The Needle's Eye that Doth Supply" and "Farmer in the Dell" and "Skip-ta Ma-loo, My Darling" (oh, long-lost little red wagon painted blue) and play "Clap In and Clap Out" and "Button, Button" and "Heavy, Heavy Hangs Over Thy Head." Still there was something wrong, Landis felt. She knew her instinct had been right when there was a party at which the more daring older ones instigated the game of Post Office. The others giggled and refused to tell her how it was played when she asked. Presently her name was called and she went out all expectancy to see in the darkened hall the boy who sat across from her at school. Nothing happened. She waited. Still nothing happened. When she went back into the room where the others were she learned that the

boy was supposed to have kissed her. He hadn't; he had been afraid. Landis loathed him, for he threw paperwads at her and stuck out his foot at school to trip her but she was sorry and ashamed he hadn't kissed her at the party. In despair she felt that no one would ever kiss her because she was different from the rest.

Gradually she turned again to older people for companionship. She would go to dinner with her father's Gail Greenwood at the new hotel opposite the old Guild place; no one ever went to the Guild Hotel now. Mr. Guild was dead, and people jeered at the old Guild hack which his son still drove to meet every train and in which no one ever rode any more. Charlie, the young man who was now also in the bank with Gail, proved another good friend to Landis and took her coasting down the long Presbyterian hill on which the smaller children dared not go alone. When her mother was away, and she was allowed to have company for supper, she would choose one of her teachers, preferably the one with the shining golden hair.

One of the bright spots of those years for Landis was her visits to Miss Alice, who had been an old friend of Rob's. Miss Alice was the matron of the Old Ladies' Home in a big little city near by. Landis loved plump little Miss Alice and she loved her old ladies. They were all very old-fashioned old ladies who never dreamed of old-age pensions. Although the Home was endowed partially, each one who lived there had paid a sum in advance which entitled her to feel she was no object of charity. Of course, much was done for the Home from time to time by its sponsors and friends, including the

city's leading saloonkeeper. On New Year's he took all the old ladies in cabs to the best hotel. The host—who looked just as a saloonkeeper should look—sat at the head of the table, Miss Alice sat primly at the foot and a good time was had by all.

Landis came to know every one of Miss Alice's charges. There was tiny Miss Downing who had two white curls hanging down each side of her gentle face and always wore a bit of real lace at the throat and a large cameo pin. It was Miss Downing who said the blessing before each meal and who held prayer meetings sometimes in her room. There was Mrs. Whitman whom Miss Alice thought of as a friend rather than one of the Home's inmates. Miss Alice was careful to show no favoritism in public but it was to Mrs. Whitman's room that she would go after lights were supposed to be out. Sometimes the two would sit and talk quietly, but often they would indulge in a surreptitious two-handed game of cards. There was the short stocky little old lady who had been born in Bohemia and who said she was a countess.

The countess was one of Landis's favorites. It was wonderful to go to call on her in her room and listen to stories of "the old country." The other old ladies sometimes smiled superiorly at the countess but Landis never did. Because she didn't smile the countess told her stories of long ago across the ocean in a land as remote and different as Mars. Best of all Landis liked to hear her tell of a trip on which the countess's father had taken her to Vienna when she was a young girl. It had been nearly half a century ago, but the countess remem-

bered how the trees had been in bloom along the Prater and they had driven in the Vienna Woods green in fresh springtime beauty, how haunting had been the waltzes and how delightfully sparkling the wines. The high light of the story was the account of the wedding of the Emperor Franz Joseph and Elisabeth which had taken place during the countess's visit. She had been present with her father and had marveled at the beauty of the stately young bride in her gown of heavy white brocade with ornaments of gold and silver. "There was a court train fastened at the shoulders with diamond clasps," the countess told Landis, "and on her head was a wreath of myrtle and orange blossoms and a diadem of diamonds. That day all Vienna loved her but later it made fun of her and called her the circus rider because of the way she could handle a horse. Bah! She was better than they. She could not stand the terrible Spanish etiquette of their court that hadn't changed in three hundred years. Those Austrians—those Hungarians—they are both bad and cruel. They have made a slave of my native Bohemia, and so I am here today. I am no longer a countess perhaps, but I am free. For centuries tyrants have ruled Bohemia but they have never been able to make us lose our language or culture or customs. We still have our own sayings, our proverbs. 'What is born of a cat will catch mice,' we said back in the old country. Our fathers and mothers told us too that 'when the bird is being caught, sweet songs are sung for it.' It is the Austrians and the Hungarians who have come again and again with their words of honey and their swords behind their backs who have taught us these things. 'Friend to

'everybody, true to nobody,' we said when we saw them."

"Why, my mother says that too," Landis said in surprise. "Only she says that 'everybody's friend is nobody's friend.'"

"It is a good proverb in any language no matter how you say it," the other replied.

In the room next to the countess was another of Landis's special friends whose stories she enjoyed. This was Mrs. Cromwell of the defiantly jet-black hair. She had been born in New York City, she told Landis, and grew up in a new street called Fifth Avenue just north of Washington Square. She remembered well the wedding of President Tyler and Julia Gardiner at the First Presbyterian Church between Eleventh and Twelfth streets. It was in the forties, too, that she had attended a famous masked ball at Henry Brevoort's house. "It was the second masked ball ever given in the city and also the last held for a long time," she told Landis. "Something happened at the ball which placed a ban on them for a long time afterward. Masked balls had always been considered very foreign and daring. Nobody was surprised then when a great scandal happened at Mr. Brevoort's ball. Matilda Barclay, whose father was the British consul, had come as Lalla Rookh. Captain Burgwyne, a young Southerner, was there also in a costume of cap and bells and cockleshells. The two had been in love for some time but Matilda's parents disapproved. The two met at the ball, went off in their masks and costumes and found a clergyman who married them at four o'clock in the morning."

"Oh, I think that was splendid!"

"No," said Juliana Cromwell, "it wasn't splendid. It's never splendid when you do what people say you shouldn't." Her voice sounded harsh and strange.

One morning when Landis went in to see her, she complained of the cold weather. "You should be in Nome if you think this is cold," her elderly friend told her.

"You mean Alaska? You've been there?" Landis asked in amazement. When the other nodded, she said again, "Oh, that's splendid!" And again Juliana Cromwell replied, "No, it wasn't splendid." There was something in her voice that frightened the child. The next moment, however, Mrs. Cromwell picked up the newspaper which she had been reading when Landis came in and said in an ordinary tone of voice:

"I was reading that Mrs. Patrick Campbell is coming to America to play in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. She is a great actress. I should like to see her."

Landis was only eight, but she knew that some way Mrs. Cromwell's story didn't add up. Or did it? She did not doubt that her friend had been at the masked ball or in Nome, but how reconcile the two? And what of the ending here in this prairie town where Juliana Cromwell listened to Miss Downing's daily blessing and read newspaper accounts which made her long to see Mrs. Patrick Campbell? It puzzled Landis all her life.

Thrilling as were the stories told by the countess and Mrs. Cromwell, it was the tales told by old Mrs. Barton that Landis liked best. Mrs. Barton's father and mother had come to Iowa twenty years earlier than David and Elizabeth. The pioneer life of the Ashes was one of

effete ease by comparison with that Jane Barton had known. Father and mother and the little seven-year-old daughter had settled about twenty miles east of Hillview in the year of 1836. It had been a terrible winter for which the newcomers had been ill prepared. Their one-room log cabin had been neither "chinked" nor "daubed." A hollow tree trunk which served as a chimney had to be constantly watched lest it catch on fire. The winds and snow were kept out as best they could be by blankets and quilts hung from the joists in the ceiling. Fortunately Jane's mother was well supplied with bedding. She took as much of this as she could spare and wrapped it around the cows in the barn to keep them from freezing to death. There was almost no food for man or beast. One neighboring family lived for six weeks on nothing but frozen potatoes. Jane and her parents lived for months on coffee and corn meal. Each night they ground enough corn in the coffee mill for next day's needs. Before winter was over, the coffee mill wore out and they boiled the corn and ate it as they would beans. Other coffee mills in the settlement wore out, too. The following autumn the pioneers decided that they must have some kind of regular mill. Although the season's harvest had been bountiful, the grain would be of little use if it could not be made into meal.

"It was Aaron Porter who was responsible for our first real mill," old Mrs. Barton told Landis. "He was an ingenious man and he decided that one could be constructed from two boulders about ten inches in diameter which he found in a field. He dressed these down and fastened one to the floor of his cabin. In the

center of the other he drilled a hole, and the top stone was made so it could revolve on a pivot above the lower. Then he rigged up a shaft with one end fixed in the upper side of the upper millstone. The other he fitted in the joist above. Two men could work the shaft and feed the mill at the same time. There was no toll for the use of the mill, and everyone called it the 'Little Savior.' "

Mrs. Barton told exciting stories of the counterfeiters and horse thieves with which the country had been overrun before the Civil War. The latter had regular routes for the disposal of the stolen horses and regular taverns at which they stayed. When they finally became too bold, the Vigilance Committee was formed to deal with them. The Vigilantes wore masks, had their own courts held at midnight in the woods, and resorted to lynchings. The most famous lynching was held in July of 1857 when two horse thieves were hanged before a crowd of over two hundred men.

Mrs. Barton's best story, Landis thought, did not deal with her own early life or personal recollections. It had been told her when she was a little girl by her father. Before his marriage he had lived in a settlement where Keokuk now is. It was here that he had known Dr. Muir who had been a surgeon in the United States Army and had been stationed at various Western forts. Dr. Muir was a fine man, her father said, with fine old Scotch traditions and an Edinburgh education back of him. One day when he was stationed at a fort on the upper Mississippi an Indian girl arrived in a canoe. Her beauty and charm were so great that the young physician married her despite the jeers of his comrades.

"Perhaps it was because of the way they went on making fun of him," Mrs. Barton related, "or perhaps the doctor remembered his proud lady mother riding in her carriage down the Princes Street he used to talk about. It may be that he thought of his father who would never have been able to understand his marriage. At any rate when the regiment was ordered to Bellefontaine, Dr. Muir left his young Indian wife behind. It was the one dishonorable act of his whole life, and he never forgave himself for it.

"After the regiment had gone, the Indian girl whom he had married started out alone with only her baby in a canoe and traveled nine hundred miles to her husband. Dr. Muir had been so overcome with remorse at his desertion and was so moved by her faithfulness that he loved and cherished her all the rest of his life. She always sat in her native dress at the foot of his table, and Father said that her husband never failed to pay her the greatest respect in every way possible.

"I'm sorry to say that the story has a sad ending. Rather than have his wife—whom he called Sophia—held up to ridicule, the doctor resigned his commission while stationed at Fort Edwards in 1820. Afterward he practiced privately at both Galena and Keokuk. It was in Keokuk that he died suddenly of cholera. He left his financial affairs in such a tangle that his widow was penniless. Sadly she took her four children and went back to her own people, the Foxes, on the upper Mississippi."

Landis was never tired of listening to this story. She was always sorry when it was finished. One winter when she went to visit Miss Alice, she knew that it was fin-

ished for her forever. Little Jane who had eaten the corn meal ground in the coffee mill in the dreadful winter of '36 was dead.

Landis mourned her as a dear lost friend, just as later she grieved over the deaths of her countess and Juliana Cromwell.

They had been a pioneer woman who had slept in a trundle bed in a one-room log cabin on the prairie; a Bohemian countess who had known the splendors of old Vienna and seen an empress married; a daughter of old New York who had danced till dawn in one of the town's proudest mansions and been cold in Alaska. Surely no Grand Hotel had never housed a stranger assortment of people than those under Miss Alice's wing in a Midwestern home for aged women. It was incredible.

It was also America.

School had failed Landis in companionship but one day she discovered a world of friends that would never fail her; she could read and no matter how much time she had, there were always more books waiting. She read all of Louisa M. Alcott and the Little Colonel books and, to her credit, only one about Elsie Dinsmore. She was fascinated by an old book in the school library called *How Charlie Roberts Became a Man*. It failed in its temperance objective since it managed to make wine an utterly intriguing beverage. Landis resolved to try it herself if the opportunity ever presented itself, but she was doubtful of having any such luck. She loved Laura E. Richards's *Captain January* and Kate Douglas Wiggin's *The Birds' Christmas Carol* and most of all

*The Palace in the Garden* by Mrs. Molesworth. Then one Saturday she discovered a book of poems in the back parlor. Usually she left poetry alone, but as she turned the pages she saw the lines:

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea.

That night before she went to sleep she said over and over to herself: "Annabel Lee . . . Annabel Lee . . . Annabel Lee." After that even Mrs. Molesworth's *Palace in the Garden* did not seem so fine a book.

It was about this time also that she discovered Rodney. Rodney, whose father was a professor in the college, lived in the old brick house on the next street where David had once had his shop. She was almost four years older than Landis and at first looked askance at the younger child who showed suddenly leechlike tendencies. Landis realized, however, that she had never before known anyone who knew as many fascinating things as Rodney and she refused to be shaken off. In time Rodney became resigned and sought Landis as Landis sought her. After school they would play with paper dolls cut from *Bon Ton*. They named them Duchess of Devonshire, Duchess of Marlborough, Countess of Derby, Lady Alisha Mayrose, and one very grand one was Queen Elizabeth. When Landis discovered Victoria's copy of *Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall* by Charles Major, she insisted that Rodney and she play the story over and over with the paper dolls. They lived in such a world of palaces, castles and manor houses that for years Landis supposed that the phrase "to the manner born" was

spelled "to the manor born." "Well, it means the same as if it were," she said when she learned the truth finally. There were other paper dolls, too, with which they played, which Victoria had brought from Chicago. These were regular ones with dresses which could be slipped off and on by means of tabs at the shoulders, and the outside of the boxes in which they came told that their names were Ada Rehan and Mrs. Leslie Carter. Ada Rehan's costume for *The Taming of the Shrew* was fascinating, but her popularity could not compete with that of Mrs. Leslie Carter when they put on her costume as Maryland Calvert from *The Heart of Maryland* and had her swing valiantly from the church bell to save her lover's life.

Rodney and Landis did other things than play with paper dolls. They played in the back campus and named the terrain there for various places in *Pilgrim's Progress*. They hung May baskets; Landis's mother made really beautiful ones for her out of crepe paper, but Rodney's had the best fudge in them. They discovered an old history book by Bancroft in Rodney's attic, and decided it was much more exciting than any they had ever studied because it came out boldly and quoted Mad Anthony Wayne as saying: "I'll storm hell if Washington will lay the plans." It was almost as satisfactory for Landis to repeat Mad Anthony's declaration over and over to herself as to whisper "Annabel Lee" after she'd gone to bed.

Summer visits to Uncle James were good fun and Landis learned there about manicures and charlotte russe and that it was now considered much smarter to

call Victoria "Mother" than "Mamma." Uncle James's big house was thrilling from the terrifying tigerskin on the shining waxed floor of the front hall to the kitchen's big French range in which the fire was never out. It was wonderful to think that from her bedroom Aunt Hortense could talk through a speaking tube to Cook downstairs, and that there was a special dining room in which the servants ate their meals. It was wildly exciting to rush through dessert every evening and run down the street to see the horses dash out for drill at the firehouse when the gong sounded. Perhaps it was most miraculous of all to know that only a few doors away there lived a man whose uncle was actually an English earl.

"Mamma, has anyone in Hillview ever been abroad?" Landis asked after she had seen this august gentleman going down his front steps one morning.

"Why, certainly," answered Victoria. "President and Mrs. Parr have been any number of times. Sir Philip and Lady Cedarleigh entertained them at their town house in London and also at their estate in Kent. It was there that Sir Philip showed President Parr a walk called lovers' lane and told him that it was here that Lady Cedarleigh took all her young masculine admirers when they came down from London to see her. The boys always liked Maggie."

"Yes, I know. But, mamma, I mean have any of the common people in Hillview ever been abroad?"

Victoria laughed. "I'm ashamed of you for talking about common people," she said. "We're all common people in America. You may go abroad yourself some-day."

"Of course, I will," Landis answered.

Much, much later Landis returned to Uncle James's house. The older ones had gone forever and ever into the silence. To them she had said a long and perhaps lasting farewell. The fire had gone out in the big French range after so many years.

Leaving behind her the melee of packing boxes and crated furniture and strapped trunks, she walked up the back driveway to the garage which had once been the stable. Here she felt that she stood face to face with all the past as she had not for years.

She paused before the empty box stalls of the pony Dandy and of James's Kentucky riding horse Duke and of the gleaming carriage horses and of old Dave the pensioner. The big cars which had passed in a yearly procession of new models through the stable's doors were gone. There remained, however, all the forgotten vehicles of her childhood. At these she looked for a long time.

There was the brougham, now dust-encrusted and with moth-eaten upholstery, against whose cushions the queenly and beautiful Hortense had once rested. Did there linger within not even the faintest forgotten fragrance of her rose perfume? Here stood the two-seated sleigh with its brass dashboard screen to keep off the snow from the horses' flying hoofs. The screen was black now, and where were the two proud green plumes mounted at each of its ends? Next came the pony cart with rumble seat behind from which the bronzed George had held the reins. Billy, the coachman who drove the surrey, had been black as ebony. Landis had always re-

greeted the surrey. There was one in the barn in Hill-view. Why couldn't Uncle James have had a victoria, which seemed much more elegant? She hadn't been entirely satisfied with Billy's livery, either. In her opinion it wasn't nearly so splendid as that of the coachman next door. Billy wore a fawn-colored coat and long trousers with hat of the same shade, but the Irishman was resplendent in black silk hat, white piqué cravat, breeches of white doeskin and boots with brown tops. Hortense and Victoria in carefully made toilets had gone driving punctually every afternoon at four o'clock if the weather permitted. . . .

Landis looked about her at the brougham and the sleigh and the pony cart and the surrey. It was very silent in the stable but somewhere far away in her mind she heard the refrain of the vanquished vanishing South in Benét's *John Brown's Body*.

"This is the last. This is the last."

The old carriages, too, were the last—mute symbols of a past long lost in a turbulent terrifying present which knew no peace nor ordered design for living nor security for the morrow.

Landis, the child, foresaw none of this, of course. She loved her visits to Uncle James's, just as she loved her trips to Chicago with Jane and Lorena and Sarah Sonabocker. The children were all apparently tireless, but Victoria and Mrs. Sonabocker, whose aunt had been lovely Lorena Rutledge, came home exhausted. They stayed grandly at the Auditorium Hotel, on a Michigan Avenue which no one called Michigan Boulevard then, and ate in the dining room on an upper floor where all

the waiters were as black as Landis's old doll Dinah. A little later they stopped at the Congress which, with its marble Peacock Alley, was an even greater experience. They went to the zoo in Lincoln Park and had Nesselrode pudding at Marshall Field's and ate ice cream at Allegretti's. They saw *The Merry Widow* and vowed that someday they would all go to Maxim's. They all fell in love with Chauncey Olcott at McVicker's and hummed his songs the rest of the season. One winter they were bitterly disappointed when little Lorena's illness prevented a trip to which they had all been looking forward eagerly. They had been promised they would be taken to see a delightful play, *Blue Beard*. The week of Lorena's illness was that of the Iroquois fire which all the country still remembers with horror.

It was with Jane and Sarah and Lorena that Landis went in for the world of make-believe in a big way. Daunted by nothing, they gave an opera in which they improvised their singing parts as they went along, with variations in the text at each performance. Lorena, in a colonial costume she had had at school, played Lucia. Landis, in trousers which Rob had worn in the wax-works when he was George Washington, took the role of Roderigo. Landis never could remember afterward what masculine accouterments Jane had donned, but she knew that she had been the cruelest of fathers whom she, as Roderigo, had baffled only after an incredible number of daring feats. Lorena was too young to be of any real use except to serve as the heroine, but she was allowed to warble "Maid, bring me my smelling salts" at intervals because she must be appeased and this

was the only line she could be trusted to remember. Little Sarah must have a part too, so she pulled the portieres which made a wonderful curtain. The opera was a great success and was repeated several times.

The Spanish influence in their lives at this time was traceable to one of Landis's queer friendships with a grownup. She had conceived a warm attachment for the young teacher of French and Spanish at the college. Miss Wetherby had invited her to see the castanets and bit of Spanish moss and tiny plaster of Paris reproduction of an arch of the Alhambra which she had brought back from abroad. It was from Miss Wetherby that she had learned, too, about cathedrals. She consulted with Jane and Lorena as to what could be done in the way of cathedral construction in Iowa. It was decided that a very creditable one could be located in the orchard of Grandmother Sonabocker.

"I want to see the cathedral, Lorena," Landis said over thirty years later; and when Lorena pointed it out to her, she said sadly: "But it's such a little elderberry bush. How did we all ever get under it?"

Jane and Lorena and Sarah were fun, but they could not be trusted as Rodney could. Sometimes they let Landis down. There was the matter of *Jane Eyre*, for instance. One night when she and Victoria were staying all night at the Sonabockers' she told them before they went to bed of *Jane Eyre* and the amorous Mr. Rochester. Jane and Lorena and Sarah sat wide-eyed with wonder, eagerly drinking in every word. Their attention made Landis feel happy and important until two o'clock in the morning when the household was aroused by the

terrified wails of the young Sonabockers who had awakened from nightmares in which wedding veils were rent in twain by wronged and demented wives who ranted about on all fours in the third story of Thornfield Hall. Mrs. Sonabocker was justly irate at Landis, and Victoria scolded her daughter soundly. It was a subdued and chastened Landis who went back to bed after the last Sonabocker sob had subsided.

"Well, I'm glad I didn't tell them the story of Trilby, too," Landis consoled herself. "And wouldn't they have just loved it."

After the disastrous Jane Eyre episode, Victoria tried to supervise Landis's reading more carefully. "What is that book and who wrote it?" she demanded of Landis one day when she came home and found her reading. "It's *The Guardian Angel* and it's by Holmes." "Give it to me. The very idea—that dreadful Mary J. Holmes," Victoria exclaimed in horror. "It's Oliver Wendell and it isn't a bit interesting. You can have it. I don't want to read any more of it, anyway."

After that Victoria felt that it was no use. "Well, whatever you read, be careful what you tell Jane and Lorena and Sarah," she admonished, with resignation. "They can't stand as strong fare yet as you apparently."

Gradually the Ash house and its ways of living were changing. The napkin rings had long since disappeared from the table, which was now set every day with pink-flowered Haviland china. There was another new set of Haviland for company, which had a tiny pattern of green and blue flowers and was gilt-edged. This was an

elaborate set of many pieces including individual bone dishes, elliptical in shape, in which one put bones from the plate after they had been divested of meat. Victoria would have been horrified if she had known that in a more decadent day Landis drafted them as ash trays. When this set of Haviland was used the table was set with star-cut glasses and desserts whenever possible were served from large cut-glass bowls. When there was company at the evening meal silver candlesticks with flower-petal shades stood at the four corners of the table. The candles for these were of a very hard wax and had to be ordered especially from Chicago, since ordinary candles were too soft and dripped on the tablecloth. Supper began to be known as dinner, although at first it was hard to remember to call it that. The silver was no longer placed all to the right of the plates, but was divided with the knife and spoons on one side and the forks on the other. Butter dishes instead of bread and butter plates still prevailed, however, and butter spreaders were a thing of the future. Always in the middle of the table stood a silver fern dish whose greenery was constantly having to be renewed. The same difficulty existed with the big palms in pots on the porches with the new mission furniture, although sometimes they would last out the summer.

The new furniture for the room that was Landis's now was bird's-eye maple. There were chairs and a desk and a chiffonier with a compartment whose door concealed a place for her best hat. The bed was of a shining brass with a box spring, as was the new bed in the guest room where there was also new mahogany furniture. Down-

stairs in the back parlor were new bookcases and a big table of golden oak, while in the front room were several new pieces of mahogany and a cabinet of glass shelves and sides in which was a piece of braided hair from the tail of the horse on which Sheridan rode to Winchester, a scrap of velvet from the upholstery of a chair on which Lafayette had sat, a cotton blossom Rob had once brought home from a trip to Southern battle-fields, the Cartwright silver candle snuffers, and various other knicknacks dear to Victoria's heart. Out of deference to Rob's memory, Victoria had left on the back parlor wall the old steel engraving of "Sherman's March to the Sea." Landis was glad, because the horror in it thrilled her always, although not quite so much as Aunt Hallie's colored picture of the Johnstown Flood where, in a mass of flames and water, houses with mansard roofs and church steeples and trees and people were swept over the wrecked bridge while one fortunate female fled along the side of the torrent on a racing horse.

There is a French phrase "*une vraie femme d'intérieur*." It is untranslatable, but roughly its meaning is a woman who has the rare and happy faculty of drawing the outside world and its interests into her own home. Victoria was indeed *une vraie femme d'intérieur*. Through one of fate's queer quirks, some of the most famous people of her time found their way to her house: first, as strangers; often, to return as friends.

One morning before she started to the bank a distraught Professor Hayes presented himself at the front door. As head of the Crollon Conservatory he had just

received a terrifying telegram from Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler, the pianist who had been engaged for an afternoon concert at the May Music Festival which had been inaugurated at the college a few years earlier. Zeisler was to be the first really great artist they had had. "Read, Mrs. King," said Professor Hayes dramatically as he extended a yellow slip. The telegram which was from Zeisler was short and to the point. It said: "Engage for me two rooms and bath at the best hotel in town." "We have not even a hotel at the present time, let alone one with rooms with bath," Professor Hayes explained unnecessarily. There was a silence. Driven by his extremity, Professor Hayes came out with his secret hope: "I—we—that is, there is no one else in town we could ask to invite her. Would you mind very much, Mrs. King?" Victoria was startled, and then suddenly delighted. "No, Professor Hayes," she answered. "She is a very great artist. I'd love to have her." So Zeisler came to stay in the best guest room and even had her private bath, for Victoria had had another installed in an addition she had built on the back of the house the year before.

Landis never forgot the dark-haired dynamic little woman with heavy-lensed glasses who came to stay with them. Zeisler and her mother hit it off tremendously from the start. They talked of Brahms and Beethoven and the newly acquired Philippines. "Let them cut their throats if they want to," Zeisler argued hotly. "What concern is it of ours, anyway?"

Zeisler was only the first of many famous folk who came to the old Ash house. Of them all, Victoria thought with the warmest feeling of Campanari with his famous

Toreador encore; but that was not because of who he was or the reputation he had, but because of what he had lost.

Campanari arrived in Hillview on the midnight train. "Ha, that I should have to come on a milk train to give a concert. It stopped at every station," he breathed fire as he told Victoria of his trip from Chicago. Suddenly his face softened. He had seen the portrait of Little James on the wall. "He is yours?" he asked. Victoria said he was her dead son. The eyes of the stocky Italian filled with tears. "I, too, had a son," he said and wept as he told her of the death of his own little boy. Then Victoria talked of Little James and they both wept together. At two o'clock in the morning she and Campanari were eating bread and milk on the kitchen table. Victoria felt as though she had known him all her life.

Landis remembered one of the distinguished guests with especial pleasure because he was such a handsome young man. After he had delivered his lecture at the college and gone on to Omaha, he wrote Victoria a letter ". . . to tell you how much I enjoyed my brief visit in your lovely home, every minute of it. It gave me great pleasure to meet you and your charming friends. Remember me to Miss Landis. Accept a thousand thanks for your thoughtful kindnesses." It was no wonder that Landis had thought him handsome, for the writer of the letter was the most-kissed man in America, and less than five years before had performed an act of audacious courage without equal in naval history. It was Richmond Pearson Hobson, who commanded the crew that sank the collier *Merrimac* to bottle up Cervera's fleet

in Santiago Harbor.

Another handsome young man came to dinner one night with Victoria's friend Frederick Stock, the conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Landis thought him even more charming than Richmond Pearson Hobson, for he found her out in a corner and joked and asked what she wanted him to sing for her. "Shall it be 'Peeping Through the Knothole in Papa's Wooden Leg' or 'We Feed the Baby Garlic So We Can Find Him in the Dark?'" he asked. He did sing for Landis, but it was a provocative little song about four-leaf clovers. The charming young man was Edward Johnson, who is today the Director of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

Down through the years came a procession of distinguished persons: Stefansson, Alfred Noyes, Paul Alt-house, Charles Rann Kennedy, Edith Wynne Matthison, Baroness Huard, Gluck, Zimbalist; and, of course, many times James's old school friend, Leslie M. Shaw, the country banker from the little town of Denison, whom Theodore Roosevelt appointed Secretary of the Treasury when Lyman J. Gage resigned. It was he who enticed Victoria into her first automobile. When it began to back down the steep hill as they were driving to President Parr's for dinner, Victoria abandoned Secretary Shaw and his vehicle with all haste; nor could she be persuaded to get again into the car. "I wouldn't ride with you in that thing again ever, Leslie," she told him, "not even if you were Alexander Hamilton himself."

The house was always filled with people during Landis's childhood, whether they were visiting celebri-

ties or the Women's Relief Corps being entertained at a kensington or friends in for the evening to play flinch. Victoria seemed to enjoy them all with impartial and equal zest, just as she did the bachelors and widowers who were in attendance upon her. "I suspect they're looking for a home more than anything else," she told Landis, underestimating that charm of hers which remained unchanged by the passing of the years. There were young men, too, "mere boys" the gossips sniffed, with whom Victoria had as hilarious fun as though she were a girl of twenty. "It's disgraceful," said many a good wife enviously; and Hallie wrote James a long and virtuous letter deplored Victoria's light ways. James sent it back to Victoria with the terse comment: "Have all the fun you can. It gives 'em something to talk about."

In spite of all her various activities, Victoria went to the bank every day. Landis suffered acutely when she realized that often she made her way there in the morning by riding with the delivery boy from the meat market when he came up to the house with his daily order. It was a startling sight to see her impeccably groomed mother, faintly scented with the odor of Parma violets and in a three-hundred-dollar suit, standing beside the boy in the back of his cart fashioned like a Roman chariot, while they careened around corners and Victoria talked amiably with him about the affairs of the day.

In a time that seemed very short indeed Landis was in the eighth grade and thinking about high school. It was 1906 and one of the most disastrous and exciting

years the world had seen in a long time. Two-thirds of San Francisco was destroyed by earthquake and fire. Vesuvius was in violent eruption. Princess Alice was married in the White House to Representative Longworth. Roosevelt favored simplified spelling, made an address on "the man with the muck-rake," disbanded "without honor" the Negro regiment which engaged in a race riot in Brownsville, Texas, and on his visit to the city of Panama became the first President to pass beyond the jurisdiction of the American flag. There was an investigation in the packing plants after the publication of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. James Ash won a \$100,000 fee in New York. Henry Miller was praised in *The Great Divide*. Camille Clifford, the Gibson girl of *The Prince of Pilsen*, married handsome young Henry Lyndhurst Bruce, the son and heir of Lord Aberdare, and his father partially disinherited him. On November 26 Caruso was arrested in the monkey house in Central Park.

There was another story in the newspapers of 1906, however, that occupied far more space than that devoted to any of the above-mentioned events. Its developments from day to day were pored over by the alpaca-coated bookkeeper and by the marcelled and pompadoured society woman in her Edwardian drawing room; by servant girls who hadn't yet graduated into typists and by typists who hadn't become secretaries; by hinterland farmers still redolent of the barnyard; by Henry Graham as he weighed sugar and counted eggs in his grocery store on the corner of Main and Elm streets. The country had had nothing like it to talk about since

Jim Fisk shot Stokes on the staircase of the Broadway Central after a quarrel over Josie Mansfield.

In New York where the headlines had been made on the night of June 25 atop Madison Square Garden, George Locke Macfarlane and Frances Rockefeller King were very busy. As press agents for the show, *Mamzelle Champagne*, they spent days and weeks pasting in a scrapbook the most voluminous record of a first performance in the history of the theater. The number of columns printed about it was beyond any press agent's wildest dreams. The only drawback from the viewpoint of those responsible for *Mamzelle Champagne* might have been that the publicity did not concern the merits of the production. The attitude of the press toward the performance could be summed up in what John A. Hennessy, city editor of the old *New York Press*, said to Reporter Alexander Stoddart after the latter had finished writing three columns about the happenings at *Mamzelle Champagne*. When Stoddart suggested that he write a criticism of the play itself, his city editor is said to have replied, "Hell, no one will read it."

He was undoubtedly right, for what happened in the performance was of less than no importance as compared with what happened at it. It was unfortunate that all the gentlemen of the press did not know this in advance. Some had already left by eleven o'clock. Kenneth Lord had gone early to write his dramatic criticism for the morning's first edition. Thomas B. Hanly of the *Herald*, who was pinch hitting that night for the regular critic, was already on his way back to Herald Square and was crossing Madison Avenue at Twenty-sixth Street when

he heard a shot. He thought it was part of the show.

It was the shot from Harry Thaw's gun which killed Stanford White. The time was about 11:05. Arthur Stanford had just finished a song, "There Was a Maid." At the entrance six show girls were waiting for the cue to go on and sing with him "I Could Love a Million Girls."

Then the shot rang out. The man who may not have loved a million girls but who had certainly loved one girl too many was dead. In shirt sleeves Lionel Lawrence, the stage manager, jumped on a table and shouted to the orchestra, "Go on! Go on!" and to the audience, "Nothing is the matter. Go back to your seats." The orchestra struck up the music for the next number but it was drowned in the screams of Evelyn Nesbit who was clinging to Harry Thaw.

Martin Green, one of the *World's* four horsemen, who was at the Garden that same night as a guest, said afterward that it was later—much, much later—when he left Considine's. For at Considine's and at all the other night spots up and down the Tenderloin tongues were busy far into the night and folk were already agog at the murder of the decade.

While she hummed "Kiss Me Again" from *Mlle. Modiste*, Landis devoured every word of the Thaw trial in the newspapers. She did not know just what a life of sin entailed, but she was sure it was glamorous, with pies to jump out of and swings in exotic studios. She read also Robert W. Chambers's new book *The Fighting Chance*. She did not like it so well as *The Marriage of William Ashe* which she had read the year before,

but the Chambers book was interesting because people said the character of Howard Quarrier was drawn from James Hazen Hyde, the bad boy of the Equitable Life. Certainly the Wenzell illustrations showed Quarrier to be a gentleman with a silky Vandyke beard. Landis wondered what Mrs. Henry B. Hyde thought of her son. She had seen her at Uncle James's and thought her a wonderfully imposing and handsome old lady with her white hair and black bonnet. She remembered one day when Mrs. Hyde had been sitting on the piazza and complained of how tired her arm was. "I've been at the bank all morning cutting coupons," she had explained. Landis did not know that she had just listened to the kind of talk of which revolutions are made.

It was in 1906, too, that Ruth, the new minister's daughter, came to Hillview. Landis liked Ruth not because she was clever like Rodney or could invent games or read the same books she did, but because she was just Ruth. When one or the other went out of town, they exchanged voluminous letters whose backs all bore the letters "S.W.A.K." They discussed the relative merits of various boys and whether Ethel Barrymore or Lillian Russell was the more beautiful. They cut out pictures of Consuelo Vanderbilt who had married the Duke of Marlborough so grandly, and longed for a husband who had the right to wear strawberry leaves. They pored over the pictures in *Burr McIntosh's Monthly*, which cost all of twenty-five cents. They wanted new dresses of Alice blue. And they both longed above all things to go to the motion-picture show, the first in Hillview. They desired a trip to the pictures so deeply that for

the time being they even forgot their crusade against their long-legged underwear which humiliated them by coming out over the tops of their button shoes.

"I'll promise not to miss Sunday school a single Sunday," Landis tried to bribe her mother. "Cross my heart and hope to die, mamma."

"But such dreadful people go," Victoria objected. "Ruth's mother doesn't think you should go, either."

"But you told me yourself they were wonderful," Landis persisted. "You said that when you saw one in Chicago the people really moved."

Victoria was fair. "Yes," she admitted, "it was wonderful. I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll get Reuben to take you. Goodness knows he's there every night."

Uncle Reuben and Landis were always good friends. She was sure he would make no objection. He was an amiable soul ever ready to do something for somebody, even if he did not always concern himself unduly with his own business. Since he lived next door to the firehouse he would even get up in the middle of the night when some frantic townsman telephoned to him and obligingly run in his nightshirt to the little building next door to ring the fire bell. He was respectable certainly, even if he was as odd as Dick's hatband; so Victoria felt that the problem of the motion picture was solved for Landis and Ruth.

Hillview's new cinema was unique in that it was called the Delphus rather than the Bijou. Its entertainment flickered and paused and paused and flickered in an old store building and its seats were benches, with slats, that held four people. It was informal and cozy

and the girls decided to take Landis's dog, whose real name of Prince had been changed to Prinnie when the adopted stray had turned out to be anything but princely in either bearing or character. Prinnie was amenable to the cinema project and allowed himself to be sneaked in quietly while Uncle Reuben negotiated the purchase of tickets. He lay down peacefully and began to snore as soon as they found seats.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have an announcement of great importance to make," the management said impressively after the singer finished "The Old Mill Stream" with its accompaniment of colored slides. "As you all know, we have a very special entertainment to offer you tonight, an epic of the frozen North where men are men and women are—er—women. In order to bring the reality of the picture home to you there have come with the film two fine big specimens of huskies from the land of snow and ice. While wild and blood-thirsty, these animals have great intelligence and respond instantly to the commands of their driver, bearing to the left when he calls out 'Haw!' and to the right when he shouts 'Geel!' We will now lead these two splendid big dogs down the aisles so that the audience can get for themselves a first-hand glimpse of Alaska, our distant possession, of which we are all so proud."

There was a clapping of hands. Then came chaos. It is debatable whether the bloodthirsty huskies smelled out the peaceful Prinnie first or Prinnie smelled out them. There was suddenly and terrifyingly a rush of the huskies who heeded neither gees nor haws and whose only objective was their gentler blood-brother, the erst-

while snoozer under Landis's feet. Prinnie's one objective was the rear exit. He made it, just in time, while a bewildered and frightened audience saw two newcomers knocked down in the pursuit and escape, and empty benches went over right and left.

A chastened Landis and a subdued Ruth saw no movies that night. They did not even ask to go again until the Delphus had been taken over by a stranger from out of town who was ignorant of the havoc they had caused. As for Prinnie, he carefully avoided for a long time the side of the street on which the nickelodeon was located.

"I'd suggest that you leave the dog at home when you go to the tent show next week," was Victoria's comment on the affair. "The bloodhounds might get after him instead of Eliza."

Prinnie was a problem child, but Victoria loved him tenderly and protectively and defiantly. She insisted that he had one of the sweetest and most lovable of dispositions, but others differed radically in their estimate of his character. All admitted, however, that he had individuality—too much of it, in fact. He was famed for miles around Hillview. It was only after he had concluded his fifteen years of hilarious existence that life went once more on its even if less exciting way.

He was a barker, a howler, a bed-jumper, a porch-tracker, a devourer of literature, including a borrowed copy of *Graustark* which he chewed to bits. In puppy days he developed an inexplicable preference for certain horses in the community. Whenever he encountered them on the street, he was off and away after them bark-

ing in his joy and throwing himself convulsively at their heads, often doing a double somersault in front of them in his delight. On one occasion he conceived an attachment for a farmer's horse which he had never seen before and much to the farmer's surprise and indignation followed him and his wagon home and established himself in the barn beside him new favorite. He remained happily on the farm for a week until the farmer discovered to whom the incubus belonged. In great disgust he returned Prinnie to an overjoyed Victoria who had mourned him as dead.

Victoria's ponies Prinnie adored as a matter of course. Equally as a matter of course they eyed with loathing him and the contortions in which he indulged each time they left the barn. Even the pony cart had such a lure for Prinnie that when it was taken to be painted he went along barking and throwing himself in front of Amos, the bearded old Civil War veteran who dragged it by the tongue to the paint shop. By the time he had reached the shop Amos knew that he would rather face the Confederates again at Shiloh than another attack of Prinnie.

One of Prinnie's great favorites was Bird, the horse of Dr. Sawyer, the family physician. It was in connection with Bird that an episode happened which gave Victoria and Dr. Sawyer cause for considerable speculation. At half past two one winter night Prinnie awakened the household with terrific barking and insisted on going out. When Victoria opened the door for him, he streaked out of sight toward Main Street and was seen no more until noon. It was not until later that Dr. Sawyer told

Victoria that in the night he had received a telephone call from the country and that as he drove Bird along Main Street a couple of blocks from the Ash house he had been joined by the faithful Prinnie who went on with him to the country and stayed until his return.

Prinnie was not supposed to go downtown, but that did not deter him when the whim was on. If it chanced that he found Bird hitched in front of Dr. Sawyer's office, he was in his element. He would establish himself under the buggy, only to dash forth immediately, barking at every horse that came along the street. One afternoon, after his barks had resounded throughout Hillview's business section for a couple of hours, John Sonabocker in the bank decided he could stand it no longer.

"Victoria, won't you go out and see if you can't send that dog home? He's a public disgrace," he said.

As Landis was coming up Main Street from grade school, she was horrified at the sight that met her eyes. Her mother, bareheaded and in one of her flawlessly expensive suits and handmade blouses of handkerchief linen, was brandishing a buggy whip menacingly in the street. It was not until Landis came nearer that she saw that the object of Victoria's attack was Prinnie, who lay on his back with all four legs waving in the air under the doctor's buggy. From time to time he would twist his head about to growl at his mistress and bare his teeth, while legs continued to wave. Prinnie's growls held no terror for Victoria, who knew he would never bite anyone, but she was afraid of Bird's alarmed movements each time she tried either to seize Prinnie under

the buggy or to dislodge him with the whip. Finally she went back into the bank in despair and put on her hat. "It's no use, John," she confessed. "The only way I can get him off the street is to take him home myself."

Prinnie's greatest claim to fame was undoubtedly the greenhouse catastrophe. He had followed Victoria to the little greenhouse one afternoon when she had gone to see about floral decorations for a college banquet the Ladies' Aid had contracted to serve. His mistress and the owner of the greenhouse were walking together from bed to bed discussing the banquet decorations when pandemonium broke loose without warning. There was a fearful crash of glass followed immediately by another crash. Something streaked by with a flying form in pursuit. Too late Victoria remembered that she had been accompanied by Prinnie. He was after a mouse.

In less time than it takes to record, the place was a shambles. From one glass-covered bed to another the agile Prinnie leaped with dreadful abandon, paying not the slightest heed to either commands or entreaties. Up and down the greenhouse went mouse and dog while precious flowers were snapped from their stems and plants were mowed down like the enemy at San Juan Hill. When a small frame whose glass was now a thousand pieces lodged around Prinnie's neck, he paused only briefly as though to settle it more comfortably, and then was once more on his way. A red rose that had caught on the frame added a jaunty note above one ear. It was the pile of smilax gathered for a wedding and lying in one corner of the greenhouse that finally proved the mouse's undoing. In it the pursued sought sanctuary, and

one second later the pursuer sought the pursued. There was a deathlike silence. Then Prinnie, still with rose over his ear and in his frame, emerged tripping over and dripping with greenery, trailing yards of smilax and clouds of glory with the mouse in his mouth. Though his progress was necessarily halting and faltering owing to his various impedimenta, he made straight for Victoria and laid the deceased at her feet.

"Oh, Prinnie," she cried in despair, "whatever am I to do with you! I set your right front leg after you jumped off the approach to Ivanhoe bridge when you saw a squirrel in the treetop below, and your left hind leg when you broke it catapulting out of an upstairs window after a cat down on the sidewalk, and this is the way you repay me."

With unexpected versatility the greenhouse proprietor was busy giving vent to a flow of language that might have been the envy of Billingsgate, but Prinnie was blissfully unconscious that it was directed toward him.

Still in his rose and frame and smilax he lay down in front of his mistress and wagged his tail.

"I'm sorry, Henry," Victoria said as she lifted the frame over Prinnie's head. "I'll make good the loss, of course, and pay you for all the time you'll have to put in getting things back in shape again. As for the decorations for the banquet, I'll order them by telephone from Cedar Rapids at once.

"And next time I come here, I'll know enough to leave my dog at home."

As she was going out the door she paused. "I'm more sorry than I can tell you," she said again. "I know how much all this loss means to you. But let me tell you this,

Henry Walton—any dog who wouldn't do what Prinnie did under the circumstances wouldn't be worth his salt!"

Victoria never let down her own, not even Prinnie.

Prinnie's one *bête noire* was the phonograph which for some years delighted Landis and her friends with its round black cylinder records which played "Hiawatha" and "Red Wing" and "The City of Sighs and Tears" and other favorites of the day. It was not the phonograph itself that Prinnie feared, but its big horn. Landis discovered one day that if you removed it from the phonograph and spoke even a single word to Prinnie through it, he became immediately the most abject and tractable of dogs. The one drawback was that it was impossible to carry the huge horn around town with any degree of convenience to control Prinnie when necessity arose. The Sonabockers especially regretted this.

Victoria's dog was politely but firmly barred from the Sonabocker house in Madrid except once a year. When she and Landis came to spend the night of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day following, Victoria claimed it was impossible to leave Prinnie at home alone. Equally impossible, said Mr. Sonabocker, was it to have the lowly Prinnie in the house with the blooded Sonabocker collie with which he was on hostile terms. A compromise was effected whereby Prinnie was banished to the basement where his long and lusty vocal accomplishments went on unceasingly as an accompaniment to the Christmas festivities above.

"Holy night! Silent night!" Jane and Lorena and Sarah and Landis would lift their sweet childish voices as they clustered around Victoria at the piano, while at

the same moment a howl fortissimo from the nether regions drowned out the melody. The superlative Christmas dinner would be eaten to howls crescendo al diminuendo which made conversation practically impossible. When friends came in merrily with gifts, their Christmas greetings were drowned by howls ritardo poco a poco diminuendo.

"How old is he, anyway?" John Sonabocker asked Victoria hopefully after a Christmas when Prinnie had been unusually vocal. Ordinarily Mr. Sonabocker was a kindly and tolerant man, but years of enduring Prinnie were wearing him down. "Perhaps he'll die before long."

"Not for many years," Victoria answered him witheringly.

She was right. When Prinnie did die at a ripe old age, it was a saddened and tearful Victoria who buried him with his red shawl and his unbleached muslin sheets on which he had made his nightly bed by the hall radiator for so many years.

"To think I whipped him the time he chewed the end of my chinchilla muff," she said as the tears ran down her cheeks. "If we could have him back, I'd buy him a dozen muffs to chew on!"

High school was wonderful and it was all different, even if it was in the same building where Landis had gone ever since entering kindergarten. There was neither running water nor electricity, although during her junior year in high school a great innovation was made by the installation of a fountain in the hall. It was no longer necessary to go to the pump in the yard for a drink of

water. The little outside retiring houses remained until the end, however, with their walls covered with some dark sandpaperlike substance which a wise schoolboard had put on so no bad four-letter words could be scrawled thereon. The raising of two fingers would take you there, if you did not raise them too often, but it was a cold trip in winter.

The studies were new and exciting in high school. You said a verse beginning "Mica, mica, parva stella," and learned that it was your old favorite "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." There was another Latin poem (quite unofficial) that was devastatingly funny. It was passed secretly from desk to desk, and read:

Boyibus kissibus sweet girlorum,  
Girlibus likibus wanta somemorum!

When you came to the end where a higher authority intervened and boyibus was vanquished because Paibus kickibus in the pantorum, you laughed right out loud. Algebra was even harder than arithmetic had been, and so was geometry, but the latter did have its compensations. Another note passed stealthily from hand to hand gave you a theroem that was not in any book. The proposition to be proved was that she loved you. It was not hard because it was done this way:

All the world loves a lover.  
She is all the world to you.  
. . She loves you.

Quod erat demonstrandum.

Hell was a word you did not use if you had parents. That was why everyone guffawed in English when Harry

Platner read the part of the Prince of Morocco in *The Merchant of Venice*. "Oh hell! what have we here?" Morocco cried as he discovered the death's-head in the casket. Harry stumbled over the fatal word and the class shouted at his embarrassment.

English was best of all; this was due in no small part to its white-haired teacher with hearty voice and ways whose very real and unusual appreciation of literature was contagious. She could be strict, too, and biting, as Landis learned when asked why Scott wrote the border ballads. "To make money," she replied in all sincerity, thinking of Sir Walter's financial difficulties rather than of art for art's sake; but when questioned on the term "maiden knight" in *The Vision of Sir Launfal* and she replied that it meant a knight who rescued maidens, Miss Smedley shouted with laughter. Miss Smedley taught *The Idylls of the King* so that every character from Launcelot to Lynette was a person you might have known in the next block. So real were they to her pupils that in afteryears the boy behind Landis named his little girl Elaine. "For the lily maid, you know," he explained in a matter-of-fact way, just as he might have said that the baby was named for his grandmother.

There were parties and sleigh rides and straw rides on which you sang "My Hero" from *The Chocolate Soldier* and "Beautiful Lady" from *Pink Lady* and "Casey Jones" and "Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl." This time Landis belonged. Victoria approved of her companions but Landis would not have been thwarted if she had not. There was the matter of the dance at Ellison's Hall. The nicest Hillview people did not go to

dances. There were public dances to which respectable folk went; the Hindu caste system still held good, however, and Landis knew better than to ask to go. She told Victoria that she was spending the evening with Erma and Erma told her mother she was studying with Landis. The two girls went to the dance with their current beaux and whirled in ecstasy to the "Dream of Heaven" waltz as played on an old square piano and by a two-piece orchestra. The tongue-lashing which Landis had from Victoria when she learned all was terrific, but she never regretted Ellison's Hall. She remained unmoved even when her mother said, "What would your grandmother have thought?"

Sooner than it seemed possible high school was finished in a blaze of glory with Landis as class president and Katharina in the ambitious class play *The Taming of the Shrew* which they gave in the auditorium of the Chapel. Naturally they omitted Christopher Sly the tinker, for Hillview audiences were less lusty in their tastes than those of the Elizabethan Globe. All the class hastened to read the Prologue, however, and realized gleefully that there was more to Shakespeare than they had found in their school texts.

Landis did not know then that in all the future nothing could ever seem funnier than the occasion when Professor Newton's garter came down in algebra class, and that good gentleman had gone on with his *x* and *y* and *z* quite unknowing while the class stifled hilarious shouts. She did not realize that she would never again have quite so much fun as she had had in the last four years.

It had been a long time since Landis's first day at school.

Miss Baker had played "Marching Through Georgia" on the wheezy organ while the children marched out in their hats and coats at the end of the last class. It had been young Miss Baker's first day of school, too, for this was her first job. She was probably much more perturbed than her pupils, but she had bravely stuck a late September rose in her belt and faced the juvenile world with a smiling face. She had soon disarmed her young charges by reading aloud *The Wizard of Oz*. They could well believe anything that might happen to Dorothy in a cyclone, for they had faced twisters themselves.

Montgomery's History, Rand-McNally's Geography (population of the United States 76,000,000), Milne's Arithmetic, Harper's Readers and *The Lights to Literature* and Reed and Kellogg's Grammar were now all a part of the irrevocable past. The sentences in the latter which were to be parsed and diagramed, however, were engraved forever on Landis's memory. To the end of her life she would remember that the bridge at Ashtabula having given way, the train fell into the river; a dainty plant is the ivy green; Alexander having conquered the world, sighed for new worlds to conquer; kind hearts are more than coronets and simple faith than Norman blood; by the streets of Bye and Bye one arrives at the house of Never; Sir Philip Sidney lived and died the darling of the court and the idol of his times. The last sentence had been tricky. It illustrated the attribute complement, although at first glance it seemed objective since it apparently answered the question "What?" "I smell a rat, but never fear, I shall nip him in the bud" had been so powerful an illustration of the mixed meta-

phor that it, too, was unforgettable.

Landis's public school days had begun in the era of the simple slate pencil and ended in that of the sophisticated fountain pen. Lessons had not been taught to the sound of a hickory stick, but certainly they were still the three R's. No one told her that Tennyson was too quaint for words and that Longfellow and Whittier in their beards were figures of fun. She did acquire, though, a knowledge of literature that was of inestimable value in teaching that life was "to stand, withstand and understand." She had no French or Spanish, no commercial courses, no domestic science. Instead, she had Latin, which gave her a grasp of the rudiments of all Romance languages. She was given a grounding in fundamentals, which would make her, should she wish to become a typist or secretary, far more expert than she could have been otherwise. Blackboards instead of sewing machines in the Hillview high school may have stifled an incipient Chanel or Schiaparelli, but it was supposed that girls could be taught at home both sewing and cooking more efficiently than they might be in a few scattered hours between looking through the microscope and probing the mysteries of the Leyden jar.

Of course, during those years of public school Landis's life was probably ruined by cruel suppression and barbarous discipline. Undoubtedly she received horrendous complexes which she was to carry to her grave. Certainly Teachers College of Columbia University would have shuddered at Hillview's educational methods. The Lincoln School would have considered her instruction quite as shockingly primitive as that Honest Abe gave himself

by the log light of the hearth. No Hillview teacher ever cajoled a pupil into opening his spelling book or sugar-coated the bitter pill of compound interest. Nobody learned declensions by the entertainment method. There were no short cuts to good marks on the report cards you took home at the end of every month for papa or mamma to sign.

There was only one answer to not knowing the answers: you didn't pass. That was all a mistake according to today's progressive methods. Nevertheless, the old system seems to have had some slight merit. It won for Iowa the honor of having the highest literacy average of any state in the Union.

"I never realized how much you did for me," Landis said to her favorite golden-haired teacher years later.

"Well, you were always a good pupil," the golden-haired one returned politely. "I remember that of all my children you were the one who always kept the seams of your stockings straight!"

Teacher and pupil fell silent, but the room was filled with music. Down across the years they heard "Jingle, Bells" and "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean" and "My Heart's in the Highlands" while the organ wheezed in asthmatic but sympathetic accompaniment.

It was 1911. Time marched on, although no red-blooded he-man would have been caught dead with a watch strapped decadently to his wrist.

The McNamara brothers Joseph and James were being defended for the dynamiting of the Los Angeles Times Building. Their lawyer was a man with baggy trousers

who was then at the height of his powers. His name was Clarence Darrow. Landis would have opened her eyes in amazement if anyone had told her that one day she and her friend Julia would drive with this same Mr. Darrow through Central Park in a victoria. In 1911 Landis was laughing with a great many other theatergoers over *Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford*. She was playing "Everybody's Doing It" on the piano, and humming "You Beautiful Doll."

The beautiful dolls of that day wore sturdy cotton underwear just as their mothers had, although mamma's voluminous umbrella drawers were doomed. Mamma herself had introduced a daring innovation on the highways. She hunted up grandma's nightcap, dressed it up and christened it a boudoir cap, and went motoring in it. It looked too fetching for words when she got out to help papa struggle putting up the top. In spite of increasing popularity of the model T's, going to the depot on Sunday afternoon to meet the Chicago train was still a small-town diversion. Sonny hadn't yet decided to be an airplane pilot instead of a locomotive engineer. The ladies in Hillview served Bavarian cream for dessert when they had company, but nobody had ever heard of hors d'oeuvres.

In 1911 no farmer ever dreamed that the day would come when an F.D.R. would tell the R.F.D. how to run its affairs. If Washington had tried to monkey in those days with the number of corn rows, Uncle Elias would have come tearing in from the north forty to grab the old squirrel rifle. Uncle Elias read the *Farmer's Almanac* with its yellow paper cover punched with a hole

for the kitchen nail just as others farmers had read it down through the decades since it was founded by crotchety Robert Thomas. Unless they have been evicted by the sheriff from their mortgaged ancestral acres, Uncle Elias' sons read it today, although the thrilling temperance articles with pictures of mother quieting the babe with a gin and milk mixture are absent. Various others continue to read it, including the Massachusetts Supreme Court when in doubt as to certain data.

It was in 1911 that Landis started to college across the street. She had expected college to be fun like high school. Instead it was like grade school where she hadn't belonged. Ruth had moved when her father went to a new charge. Rodney was out of town on her first year of teaching. There was her new friend Eve, but Eve was an outsider who lived also in the town and not in the dormitories with the other girls. Landis wished the Sonabockers hadn't gone off to boarding school.

Once more she turned to her old friends, the books. She met Schopenhauer, who knew that ninety-eight per cent of the world's people would rather die than think. She discovered Romain Rolland's *Jean-Christophe* and Ellen Key's *Love and Marriage* and Samuel Butler's *Way of All Flesh*. She read Anatole France, who bade her look on life with irony and pity; it was a lesson she never forgot but in learning it the world lost something of its zest and joy. Oscar Wilde told her that life was only a mauvais quart d'heure with a few exquisite moments, and with a wisdom beyond her years she knew that he was right. She loved and remembered always his

O Singer of Persephone!  
In the dim meadows desolate  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

She discovered and thought there were no more tragic lines in any language than Rossetti's

Look into my face, my name is: Might Have Been,  
I am also called: No More, Too Late, Fare Thee Well!

Meredith's *Modern Love* she pored over and took for her own his verses:

If the mad Past on which my foot is based  
Were firm, or might be blotted: but the whole  
Of life is mixed: the Mocking Past will stay:  
And if I drink oblivion of a day,  
So shorten I the stature of my soul.

She was very young and very cynical and perhaps very right; if Victoria had known what went on in her mind, she would have been inexpressibly shocked.

At the end of her second year in college Victoria sent her daughter abroad with two of Landis's older friends, Grace and Virginia, who had cousins in the English Midlands. Landis found it was the England of her earlier dreams. It was the country of Washington Irving which she had known in her high school English. It was her mother's Dickens and Thackeray and the land of Mrs. Humphry Ward's novels which she had read serially in *Harper's*. It was H. G. Wells's *Tono-Bungay* and Galsworthy's *The Dark Flower* and Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale*. It was even the England of Mrs. Molesworth's *The Palace in the Garden*.

Landis loved it all from the lion of Trafalgar to the

flash of deer in the quiet bracken of an English park, from the crowds of Piccadilly to the hawthorn along the winding country lanes. She lunched at Rumpelmayer's and went to an auction at Christie's. She thumbed her nose figuratively at an equestrian figure of George III and glared at a statue of a famous English general. "Why, he ordered the Boston Massacre!" she exclaimed indignantly. (The Hillview grade school teachers had done a patriotic job in teaching American history to the young.) She shed a tear over Nelson's last letter to Lady Hamilton under its glass in the British Museum. She liked the pleasant clink of golden sovereigns in her purse and asked why you paid for clothes in guineas when there was no longer such a coin. She wondered why everywhere were swan lanes and roads and swan pens and inks and swan pubs. "Everyone seems to be singing a swan song," was her comment.

She thrilled at the ruins of the castle at Ashby-de-la-Zouch where the tournament in *Ivanhoe* had been held. The falls of Lodore were disappointing, however, for they were only trickling instead of crashing and dashing as the poem had promised they would be. She went to Haddon Hall and thought of a paper doll named Dorothy Vernon and longed for Rodney. Glamour received a body blow, however, in the church at Bakewell where there was record of how prosaically numerous had been the progeny of the beautiful Doll and Sir John. At Kenilworth she sighed for Amy Robsart, Leicester's secret bride, and felt betrayed that the castle was red. The castles that had belonged to her and Rodney had always been gray. She heard Nellie Melba sing her famous

Mimi in *La Bohème* at Covent Garden and saw Arnold Bennett's play, *Milestones*, and *Romeo and Juliet* with Beerbohm Tree as a peerless Mercutio and a gifted young actor named Philip Merivale who was Romeo. She shivered in the rainy coldness of the usual English summer and wondered if Tennyson's Maud had had sense enough to put on high buckle overshoes and three red flannel petticoats and a windbreaker before she went to meet her lover in the garden. She sat in the window of her room on an upper floor of a hotel in Keswick and listened to a band of street musicians who sang a song she had never heard before; it was "Tipperary."

When she sailed away she left an England neither she nor the world would ever see again. It was the year of 1913. She did not know that one day the *Arabic* on which she made the westward journey would lie at the bottom of the ocean, done to death by a torpedo.

For six days on the voyage home she thought she was in love with a handsome young Canadian officer returning to his regiment. "If there were a war, I'd be scared to death," he confided in a burst of engaging frankness. "I'm just a chocolate soldier."

Landis knew that he had been mistaken when she read his name among those who received the Victoria Cross for bravery in the Dardanelles.

It was in 1913 that Victoria made so flawless a marriage that not even the ladies of the intellectual Ingle-side Club or the more social Entre Nous or the frankly social Good Luck Club could quibble with it. At

James's home in the East she married Armstrong MacKenzie of Pittsburgh. Hillview could not accuse him of being an effete Easterner, even if he did occasionally refer to the barn as the carriage house, because he was in reality one of them and his life was the story of the farm boy who made good in the big city. He had, moreover, much of the same quiet dignity and endearing charm of manner that had been Rob's, although he was a more handsome and distinguished-looking man, with iron-gray hair and keen brown eyes.

In common with most of Iowa, the vicinity around Hillview included several little communities which had come from across the ocean at no very distant date. There were the Bohemians among the hills across the river and the Germans in Madrid. To the west of town was also a settlement of Scotch-Irish whose rich farms lay along a road known as Irish lane. Some of them had fled from Ireland on sailing vessels in the dreadful years of the potato famine and the typhus plague which accompanied it, while others had followed when they heard in letters of the bountiful lands which had been found in the new country. Although their neighbors referred to them generally as Irish, they were in reality Scotch who had settled in Tyrone and other northern counties. Their characteristics were those of the thrifty Scot, although the years in Ireland had given them a certain leaven of Irish wit and expansiveness of spirit that they would otherwise not have had. Before long their farms were among the best cared for and most prosperous in the neighborhood. It was not unusual for one of them to sell a team of Percherons with fine long

black heads, fleur-de-lys above the eyes, deep chests and finely boned legs, for a thousand dollars to one of the big packing houses in Chicago.

Many of these Scotch-Irish possessed education and culture on their arrival here, and a few brought money. Among the first settlers was Robert Smyth, who came as early as the territorial days of 1840, and who later became a guiding spirit of the community. Colonel Robert, as he was always called later, because of his service in the Union army where he disbursed over \$10,000,000 as paymaster, had gone to farming first with oxen and floated his produce down the river to St. Louis on the flatboats then in use; some of these were 60 feet long and 16 feet wide, and capable of carrying 4,000 bushels of wheat. After his marriage Colonel Robert moved to the county seat and read law. He was admitted in time to the bar, but love of the land pulled him back to his farm after the Civil War. He left it only to serve many terms in the legislature, both as Representative and as Senator. He was also interested in education and acted for many years as a trustee of the college. When he died, it was said of him that he was "twenty years an Irishman, sixty years an American, and eighty years a Christian gentleman."

It was in this sturdy settlement of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, whose names of Boyd and Craig and Ellison and Gormley and Smyth and Moffit and Spear and Mackenzie were respected by the whole countryside, that Armstrong Mackenzie had been born. He had been one of a large family and had had to make his own way in the world. He had taught district school near Hillview

for \$19 a month to earn his tuition through college. After his graduation he had gone east to relatives who had helped him find a business opening there. A widower at sixty, he had retired on a more than sufficient income. It was on one of his visits to his brothers in Iowa that he had renewed an old but casual acquaintance with Victoria.

Victoria never told anyone but Landis her immediate reaction to Armstrong Mackenzie's proposal of marriage. Many times in the years that followed she started to reveal it to her husband but fortunately prudence restrained her. No man would enjoy the knowledge that his offer of marriage was met with wild if concealed mirth, nor would the picture of Victoria in the attic tank have seemed even to a devoted Armstrong one suggestive of glamour.

All Victoria's active life she possessed an enormous capacity for physical work. She admitted shamefacedly that she had never assembled an entire meal and had she wished to claim the distinction, she might have been known as the one woman in Hillview who had never done a week's washing and ironing. Other quite as homely duties, however, she entered into wholeheartedly. While other women, even with husbands, employed in winters a traveling furnace man, Victoria tended her fires throughout the many years of her widowhood. Her delight was to undertake personally the supreme task of housecleaning each spring known as "doing the barn." Plumbing she maintained was her specialty, and always pointed with pride to the occasion when the laundry tubs were stopped with lint

and soap and the plumber who had been summoned went back to get a helper to dig up the cement floor. On his return, Victoria had met him smilingly with the information that she had opened the drain with a long bent wire and that no cement floor would be torn up that day.

Cleaning the attic tank which held the "soft" water for the house was another of Victoria's special jobs that no one else was ever allowed to undertake. This tank, which Amos the handy man pumped full once each week from the basement, held the cistern water used in washbowls and tubs. In the course of a year silt would accumulate in the bottom of the tank and make the water turgid. "Now we're getting coffee baths again and it means I must climb through the hole in the guest room ceiling," Victoria would announce.

It was an unusually warm day in early autumn that Victoria cleaned the tank the year of Armstrong MacKenzie's memorable visit. When the little trap door was removed from the ceiling and Victoria mounted a step-ladder placed on top of the dresser, she wore but one scanty garment. "There isn't any use of wearing anything else when I have to crawl right into that filthy tank," she explained to Landis who handed a lighted lamp up to her. "I'll be covered with mud from head to foot by the time I'm through."

Victoria had almost finished her strenuous efforts within the tank when she heard the doorbell ring. Presently Landis called through the hole that Mrs. James Mackenzie was in the parlor and wanted to see her. "I can't stop now," Victoria called down. "Tell

Mrs. Mackenzie I'm busy at something I can't leave. Ask her to wait."

"She says she won't wait, but she wants to know if you will go with her and Mr. Mackenzie and his brother Armstrong on a picnic supper to the Palisades tonight," Landis reported later.

"I'd love to," Victoria answered gaily. "I'm almost through with this dirty old tank. Tell her I'll be ready in an hour.

"I'm a pretty sight, I must say," she said to Landis shortly afterward as she reached the floor by the step-ladder and dresser route. "I'm going to burn this old chemise I have on right away. It's too filthy to put in the clothesbasket." Perspiration ran down her face in dirty streaks.

"I'm glad Mrs. Mackenzie didn't see you," Landis admitted. "What are you going to wear? Your new white linen with the baby Irish and Cluny inserts? It looks lovely with your new white buckskin pumps with the cut steel buckles."

It was that night after the picnic supper was over when Victoria and Armstrong Mackenzie were walking on a path along the cliffs that he told her what was in his mind.

"Victoria," he said, "every fall I've been coming out here for years and I've been trying to get up my courage to ask you if you could possibly marry a dull fellow like me. Then every fall I'd go back without having dared and live through another year cursing myself because I hadn't."

Victoria listened in surprise. Then in one of those lightning flashes of intuition and immediate decision on

which she always relied, she knew that she was very pleased as well as surprised, and that after long years of widowhood she was going to have another and successful marriage. She said nothing, however.

"When I first waked this morning I couldn't get the picture of you out of my mind," Armstrong Mackenzie went on. "Finally this afternoon I knew that I couldn't stand it any longer. I thought of how beautiful and cool and gracious you were there in your lovely home, with not a hair of your head out of place, and smelling of violets the way you always do—"

"Of me how?" Victoria interrupted in a stifled voice.

"All the rest of us were hot and rumpled and disordered, but I knew that behind your green shutters you were sitting as unruffled as—"

A strange sound from Victoria made him pause in his flight of fancy. "What is it?" he asked. "Is anything wrong? Oh, Victoria, tell me that you will marry me!"

With superhuman effort Victoria controlled wild peals of silent laughter . . . how unruffled and cool and gracious and smelling of violets she had been that afternoon in her chemise as she mopped around in the mud and water of the tank in the stifling attic . . . it was priceless.

"Yes, Armstrong, I will marry you," she said finally without coquetry when she had regained her self-control. "Only you must realize beforehand that you won't always see me sitting cool and unruffled. I'm not really that kind of person at all, I'm afraid. I'm pretty trying sometimes."

"I don't believe it."

"And I'm not at all a restful person," Victoria warned.

"I want you just as you are," Armstrong insisted stubbornly.

"But will you be contented here in the country after a lifetime of city ways?" It did not occur to either of them that Victoria might go East with Armstrong.

"Certainly I will be," he answered. "You forgot that I never saw a city until after I was twenty-one."

Much later Victoria laid her arm on his with a curious timidity. "Armstrong, I hope you won't mind but there is something I must tell you. I can't wear colors ever again. It isn't because of Rob. It's—it's because of my baby, Little James. I've never worn anything but black or white or gray since he died twenty years ago. I—I hope you understand."

"Yes, Victoria, I understand," Armstrong answered gently.

"You see, it's like the picture Burne-Jones said he was going to paint someday," Victoria went on. "He said it was to be of a man walking down the streets of a great city full of all kinds of happy life. There would be children and lovers walking together and ladies leaning from windows. The man would walk down the street to where the gates would be wide open letting in a space of green field and cornfields in harvest. But all around his head would be a great rain of swirling autumn leaves blowing from a little walled graveyard."

"I understand," Armstrong said again. "I would not like you in anything but your black and white and gray, Victoria."

Afterward when she told Landis of her engagement,

Victoria said: "He is a rare, fine man; but I won't marry him if you do not want me to. You are the only thing I have left in the world and I will not do anything to make you unhappy."

"Of course, I want you to marry him," Landis replied. "Mac and I are going to hit it off tremendously."

And they did. They went to ball games together and downtown on hot nights to bring home ice cream and to Cedar Rapids to Greene's Opera House which had never housed an opera. As they left the theater after seeing a troup ing Maude Adams in *Peter Pan* Landis noticed that there were tears in her stepfather's eyes.

"Did you like it that much, Mac?" she asked.

"I thought it was beautiful," he answered simply.

"That's the fay in you," Landis laughed. She did not dare tell him that she knew exactly how Diamond Jim Brady felt when he burst into the bar after he had seen the second act and shouted: "I'll buy champagne for everyone in this room if anyone can tell me what that play is all about."

Victoria's marriage was a great success from every angle. It was no wonder that she preened her feathers a little and in secret as she ordered her new calling cards.



**1914–1927**



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A TALL boyish-looking chap with a wife so lovely that she became the Only Girl for the majority of the country's male population was doing the tango. They did also another new dance called the Castle Walk. They were Vernon and Irene Castle. It was 1914.

In March Victoria and her husband sailed on the *Majestic* for Cherbourg. Under her heavy steamer wrap Victoria wore a black and white checked suit with a skirt whose inside dust braid just cleared the ground and whose coat had a jaunty peplum. Her smart black straw hat had an ornament in front that was all of a foot tall. She was a distinguished-looking woman. Mac was justly proud of her.

It was a wonderful trip. Victoria enjoyed every moment of it, although after a round of Paris night spots, she retained as long as she lived a firm conviction, war valor notwithstanding, that the old geographies were correct when they described the French as "a gay people fond of dancing and light wines." Perhaps Landis was right when she insisted that to the end there was no small bit of Puritan underneath Victoria's liberalism. Victoria ordered three hats from Maria Guy and a dress from Patou. "Just a good general all-around dress," she ex-

plained (and apologized for) its price. "I can wear it both to mill and to meeting." She adored Foyot's and Le Tour d'Argent and Marguery's and Lapérouse's and Voisin's. It was as she was entering Paillard's on the Boulevard des Italiens one night before going to the Opéra-Comique that she said to her husband:

"Do you know, I'm hungry as a harvest hand." Then she laughed. "Good heavens, Armstrong," she asked, "how many people in this restaurant do you suppose know how hungry a harvest hand can be? I'm far from home, but I don't seem to talk any differently. I'm still a prairie product."

It was indeed a wise La Rochefoucauld who said: "L'accent du pays où l'on est né demeure dans l'esprit et dans le cœur comme dans le langage."

Never once in all her trip from Iowa to Africa did Victoria leave Hillview far behind her. At Grenoble she bought gloves for the ladies of the Women's Relief Corps. At Grasse she purchased perfume for her coworkers in the Ladies' Aid Society. With no thought of irony she cabled the minister from Monte Carlo last-minute instructions about a dinner that was to be held for the church Brotherhood. It was one beautiful April morning in Avignon in the gardens of the popes of the "Babylonian captivity" of the church during the fourteenth century that Victoria found the gift to take home to her friend, Father Knebel. She and Mac had finished their tour of the beautiful palace which had housed the popes in their sixty-year exile from Rome, and were standing in the gardens looking down the Rhone at the ruins of an old Roman bridge. Beside Victoria was a clump of

shrubs taller than her head. As she turned to look at their green glossy leaves, she had a sudden inspiration.

"Mac, wouldn't it be splendid if I could take a little sprig of this beautiful plant to Father Knebel at home?" she said. "I think it would mean a great deal to him."

"I don't see how it would be possible to keep it alive," Mac pointed out practically.

"Well, I'll try, anyway," Victoria answered as she broke off a small branch.

That night she placed it in a glass of water, and in the morning when they left Avignon, she wrapped it in moist cotton. This daily procedure she followed on her travels down into the African desert, back to France, through Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Paris once more and across the Channel to England. When she presented it finally to Father Knebel in Iowa, it was a sturdy little plant growing in a small pot. The two sprigs which she had taken from it to keep for herself thrived likewise until they became beautiful plants which stood in large wooden tubs on either side of the front door of the old Ash house in Hillview. No other plants in Victoria's garden ever gave her as much pleasure as these with their little creamy blossoms whose sweetness the bees preferred to all others in springtime and whose red berries glowed like holly later in the season.

Colorful Marseilles, their point of embarkation for Africa, thrilled Victoria; she said she would never again look at one of her neat white Marseilles bedspreads at home without seeing the network of masts and multitude of smokestacks in the crowded harbor against the background of the smoky city with the Byzantine domes

of the new cathedral on the left and the high belfry and golden statue of the Madonna of Notre Dame de la Garde on the right. She confessed that she was not as anxious to reach Algiers as she was to see the cream-white Château d'If which they passed on the way.

"Because of the *Count of Monte Cristo*, you know, Armstrong," she explained. "Don't you remember poor Dantès who lay in a cell so deep and so silent that in the night he could hear a spider weaving its web, and how he finally escaped by being thrown off the cliffs in a sack with a thirty-six pound shot tied to his feet? I was horrified when I found out only last winter that Landis had never read Dumas's great story. I bought a copy for her right away and wrote on the flyleaf: 'No child should ever grow up without having read the *Count of Monte Cristo*.' She read it, but I don't think she enjoyed it as much as I did. Young people nowadays seem to want to read novels that are really psychological discussions instead of stories."

Victoria was so excited over Château d'If that she had underestimated what interest Algiers would arouse in her. Amid the wild cries and cacophony of many tongues and voices, shrilling of whistles and deafening blasts from outgoing boats, strident beating of drums and raucous braying of donkeys, she was in her element. She insisted even on going into the town's narrowest and darkest street where one met not veiled women, but painted and powdered creatures with vermillion cheeks and darkened eyebrows and henna-tinted nails. Standing invitingly in a doorway was an especially bold siren in a pink satin tunic embroidered in silver. Her person was bedecked

with rings, bracelets, necklaces and brooches. On her forehead were bangles and on her bare ankles silver anklets. When she dared to leer at Mac with heavy eyes, Victoria stuck out her tongue at the charmer. It was not until later that she felt shame and voiced remorse at her childish gesture. "I shouldn't have done that," she said. "Who knows what drove her to such a life?" Mac started to make a highly skeptical reply, but after looking at Victoria fondly for a moment, desisted.

Later they sat at a table on the sidewalk in front of one of the cafés in the Place du Gouvernement. In the background were mountains and whitewashed mosques and palms and ilex trees. On their right patriarchal sheiks and Arabs in white haïks and burnouses drank Turkish coffee. To the left Frenchmen with pointed beards sipped absinthe far from the boulevards of their native Paris. Near by smart officers in blue coats, scarlet breeches and gold braid, and aggressively waxed mustaches joked over their beer. The air was heavy with the cries of venders of Oriental embroideries, sweetmeats, carved canes, Kabyle rugs, jewelry, stuffed lizards and alligators . . . Trash and treasure. . . . It was all the strange and sinister city of Algiers, so bright with sunlight and so dark with evil.

Suddenly Victoria jumped up. There was a look of grave concern on her face. "I've just remembered that I haven't told Landis to have a cake ordered for the hired man and his wife on the farm for their wedding anniversary," she exclaimed. "I must go right back to the hotel and write Landis this afternoon so she will get it in time."

Mac shook his head in despair.

"Victoria," he asked, "don't you ever forget anything or anybody, anywhere?"

The next morning, after the approved fashion of the day, it was a fearfully and wonderfully veiled Victoria in all-enveloping motorcoat who started with Mac on their long-anticipated automobile trip whose final objective was Biskra, on the very edge of the Sahara. Timgad, on their way, too had been a city which they talked eagerly of visiting. Once Château d'If had faded against the horizon, on shipboard Victoria had plunged into a book containing an account of that ancient Roman city which had once been the center of civilization in the heart of a barbarous country and whose ruins surpass today even those of Pompeii. This magnificent city with its baths, temples, statues, forums and monuments built during the reign of Trajan in the year 100 was unknown until modern times even to the French, who began its excavation in 1888.

Early one afternoon their chauffeur pointed at a sign-board indicating that Timgad was only a few kilometers ahead, and shortly afterward they saw against the darkness of the Batna Mountains a vast mass of ruins on an elevation. Here at last was the city they had journeyed so far to see; it did not disappoint them. Fascinated, they wandered with their guide along the ancient streets past ruins of baths with beautiful mosaics and once-proud houses and library and market place. Walking up the Cardo Maximus until they reached another street which crossed it at right angles, they went up twelve steps into

the forum which was entered by a monumental gate and surrounded by porticoes. The guide pointed out some of the tiles in the forum pavement on which was tracing for games, but it was Victoria who found scratched by an idle hand the credo of some carefree Roman dead for centuries. "To hunt, to bathe, to play, to laugh—this is life," he had written forever on the tiles.

The setting sun made the columns and pillars cast long shadows across the ancient streets and the distant Aurès Mountains were mistily rose and mauve when Mac and Victoria stood at last before the arch of Trajan made of warm yellow sandstone with fluted marble columns.

"*Sic transit gloria mundi,*" said Victoria softly. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears. "Armstrong," she went on, "I have a confession to make. I've always admired the Romans a thousand times more than the Greeks, in spite of Greek art and learning which made that of their conquerors seem barbarous by comparison. I've always admired the Romans more than any other people, I think, because they did things. They were organizers and conquerors. They won the whole ancient world for themselves—and then they weren't able to conquer themselves. I suppose I should think about the lesson to be learned from that instead of glorifying them."

When Mac walked through the central and largest of the three arches of the Trajan monument a few moments later, he supposed Victoria had followed him. On turning, however, to say something to her about a white marble statue which still stood in one of the niches, he found that she was engaged with the guide in an animated discussion of modern Algerian roads.

"They are the best I have ever seen," she was saying as Mac approached. "Just how are they constructed?"

"A road is filled to the depth of fifteen centimeters with crushed rock and sand wetted through and thoroughly rolled," the guide replied. "Then a layer of the same, one centimeter deep, is added and rolled. After that it is covered with a coating of sand. No tar or chemical combination is used on any road here."

"What do they cost a mile?" Victoria inquired practically.

"Come now, Victoria," Mac interrupted, "what do you think you're doing, anyway? Trying to find out how we can introduce African methods of road construction in Iowa?"

"Yes, I am," she replied defiantly. "Our roads are a disgrace to the nation. They really aren't roads at all—just strips of bottomless dust or slush or mud between two fences. Don't you laugh at me, Armstrong Mackenzie, because I'm trying to find out how to do something to improve them. You know I admired the Romans because they went out and did things instead of just sitting around mooning about doing them."

Mac went off shaking his head. He remembered that Victoria had warned him at the time of their engagement that she was not a restful person.

"But thank God she is never a boring one, either," he added to himself as he waited for his wife to join him. "I never know what she will do next. She keeps me guessing. I suspect that is why I'd rather be married to her than to any other woman on earth."

Victoria was in an entirely different mood when they

reached Biskra and the real desert at last. In that wonderful oasis of 150,000 palms and golden sunshine and white minarets and domes, Victoria seemed to relax at last. For a whole day she was content to sit on the wide balcony outside the room in their attractive and comfortable hotel and watch the flow of fascinating Oriental life in the street below. Not until the next morning did she and Mac leave their Moorish-looking hotel to visit the shops with their varied wares, and thence on to the market. It was on their way there that they met a big ebony Negro dressed in skins and decorated with bits of mirrors, long chains of animals' teeth and shells. He shouted and leaped and rolled in wild abandon while another Negro beat on a tom-tom. Victoria was terrified.

"Don't be afraid," Mac told her. "They're only having a good time. What's the matter, Victoria, anyway? You were brave enough the time the marshal telephoned in in the middle of the night that he thought the lock on the bank door had been tampered with. When we got downtown, it was all I could do to keep you from rushing in first. As I remember, I did just manage to get in ahead of you, while the marshal led up the rear of the procession."

"Oh, but that was when I thought something had happened to the bank," answered Victoria, as though that explained everything.

After a quiet luncheon they walked through the village nègre where coal-black babies rolled in the dust and little girls in red and yellow cotton dresses ran after them begging for sous. Once out of the filthy village they found themselves on a glare of white road along which came a camel train with native drivers. Soon after they came to

a white gate through which they walked into the beautiful garden of Benevent belonging to Count Landon. Here in a tapestry of sunlight and shadow they wandered down paths from which they saw every variety of tropical and European tree. Birds trilled above them and from afar came the ripple of hidden water. It was while they were resting on a bench overhung with masses of bougainvillea blossoms that Victoria said:

"I can't forget Domini in Robert Hichens's *Garden of Allah*. I feel her everywhere in this garden."

"Do you know, one reason that I love you, Victoria, is because books mean so much to you and you are constantly connecting them with places and life," Mac replied. "I had no idea before we were married that you read so much. I thought you were too busy. All my life I've read a great deal. I don't mean that I've read necessarily deep books or that I've kept up with the modern ones, but I've never been able to read cheap ones, either. I remember that when I got my first month's salary of nineteen dollars for teaching country school, I walked to town to buy Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. I can still repeat almost all of it from memory."

"He that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counselor, a cheerful companion or an effectual comforter,'" quoted Victoria.

"And don't worry about not keeping up with each Tom, Dick and Harry of a book that is published fresh every hour like the much advertised confectionery. Most of the stuff Landis and her friends are now proclaiming as so wonderful is just so much trash. They are too close to it to pass judgment. Someday it will be as outmoded

and ridiculous as the stories I read once in *Godey's* along with the advice of its editor, Sarah Josepha Hale, on the subjects of card playing, tight lacing and Sabbath breaking."

There was a long silence as they listened to the song of a bird.

"You know, Armstrong—well, the truth is, my dear, I love you very much." She slipped her hand in his. "I wonder why it is that we don't find time oftener to have talks like these?"

Later they wandered down to the wall over which they looked out into the vast Sahara. As they rested on one of the seats that are placed there at intervals, Mac said:

"We've come a long way, Victoria."

"Yes," she answered, and knew that he meant not only the many miles that lay between them and home, but the even greater distances which stretched between them and the simplicities of their prairie childhood.

Behind closed eyelids Victoria saw again the Hillview of long ago with its neat little frame houses behind their white picket fences . . . streets along which drowsed horses in fly nets and straw sunbonnets on dusty summer days . . . snow and bobsleds and cutters jingling with sleighbells and piled high with buffalo robes . . . smelled leaves burning in bright blue October weather . . . remembered fragrance of spring violets growing in a grove through which a little girl in pantalettes and candy-striped stockings went to cross a stile.

There was a long silence as they watched the pearly mountains across the desert.

"Yes," Victoria said again, "a long, long way."

The peaceful garden of Benevent, too, seemed far away in the weeks that followed as they hurried back to the Continent and on a motor trip through different countries there. After a final trip back to Paris, they crossed from Calais to Dover. Victoria had insisted that they land at Dover because she wished to see the chalk cliffs. "There are cliffs at Folkestone, too," Mac told her, but she held out for her choice not only because of the cliffs but also because in the novels of her girlhood the young lovers had always managed to make the Calais packet at Dover just in time to escape the maiden's cruel father who rode fast—but not fast enough—behind them.

"And don't you remember the opening chapters of *Tale of Two Cities*, Armstrong?" she reminded him, "and Mr. Lorry and Miss Manette at the Royal George where there was the Concord bedchamber into which only one kind of mysteriously and heavily wrapped man was ever seen to go, but all kinds and varieties of men came out of? No, I wouldn't miss Dover for anything."

So it was from Dover they took the boat train to London. At Brown's Hotel where they had made reservations they found disconcerting news from home awaiting them. The cashier in the Hillview bank was very ill, and they must catch a boat sailing the next morning. After passage home had been arranged, Victoria sighed in disappointment.

"It's dreadful not to really see London, but I will miss seeing Canterbury Cathedral even more," she said. "I've always wanted to see Canterbury just the way I wanted to see Dover. And now we can't go."

"If you would really rather go down to Canterbury

than try to dash around London, I'm sure there will be time." Mac was satisfactory in his ability to make apparently impossible arrangements. "Yes," he went on after he had consulted an ABC railway guide, "if we hurry we can catch a train at noon. It will only give us a little over an hour in Canterbury. That certainly isn't very much time, but if you think—"

"Oh, Mac, of course I do. I want to drive through the streets and see the houses with low lattice windows bulging out and quaint little panes of glass and brass knockers ornamented with fruit and flowers like Mr. Wickfield's where Aunt Betsy Trotwood took David Copperfield to live with Agnes and Uriah Heep. And I don't care if only we can stand in the nave of the cathedral and take one long look and run. It will mean as much to me as anything we've seen on all this trip."

Mac and Victoria were both breathless with haste as they got into the train for Canterbury. The compartment was empty and Victoria took off her hat and with closed eyes rested her head against the cushion. Just as the gates were about to close a belated traveler with a big Irish setter rushed down the platform and into the compartment where they were. In the same moment the dog, straining on his leash, jumped onto the seat and firmly planted his front feet through the straw crown of Victoria's hat. "So sorry," said his tweeded, sturdy-booted mistress as she seated herself and brought out a book to read.

"W-what did you say?" gasped Victoria.

"So sorry," repeated their traveling companion as she turned a page.

It was too much for Victoria. She broke into hilarious laughter to which the stranger paid no more attention than she did to Mac's angry glare. "Oh, Mac," Victoria whispered, "it's so dreadful that it's funny."

When the Englishwoman got out at the next station, Mac exploded. Victoria was philosophical, however, although she insisted on taking the ruin with her when they reached Canterbury.

"I paid forty-five dollars for it at Maria Guy's in Paris just before we left," she explained, "and it's one of the most becoming hats I've ever had. I can have a new crown put in when I get home and it will be good as new. Just hold it under your arm inside your folded newspaper, Armstrong, and no one will notice it. There isn't time to buy another hat in Canterbury, anyway, and if I did, I'm sure it would look like something Betsy Trotwood wore." Somewhat reluctantly Mac did as she asked with her hat.

When they reached the entrance of the cathedral, he began to be quite sure that the whole Canterbury expedition had been ill-advised. It was an ancient but very firm verger who barred the way to Victoria at Christ church gate. "Ladies are not allowed to enter without hats," he explained.

"Why—why—" Victoria spluttered, and paused. That she was president of the church Ladies' Aid Society at home would get no special dispensations for her here. She rallied her forces, however.

"In my country we think we can pay no greater reverence than baring the head," she wheedled the verger.

"So sorry, madam," he replied obdurately.

If he had chosen any other form of apology than the one which still rankled so deeply, Victoria might have retreated; another "so sorry" proved too much.

"Armstrong, not even the Archbishop of Canterbury can stop me from going into that cathedral." She eyed her husband's hat speculatively. For one dreadful moment he had a mental picture of himself left alone hatless outside while the scene of the murder of Thomas à Becket in the transept within was reverently viewed by a Victoria wearing his black derby. Indeed, Victoria had weighed the advantages of borrowing this piece of masculine attire, but decided against them.

"Give me my beautiful hat that miserable woman's horrible dog poked the crown out of." She turned to Mac. "I may look like some drunken bum being thrown out of a saloon, but if wearing it is the only way I can go inside, I'll put it on." And she did so.

"But, madam," the verger began to protest in horrified distress.

"Let us pass, if you please," Victoria said haughtily as she stepped into the South Porch. "My head is sufficiently covered now. I am quite willing to give you all another example of Mark Twain's *Innocents*."

On any and every continent she was still the one and only Victoria.

Victoria would have laughed heartily if anyone had told her that she was also a great lady in the grand manner.

"I do hope Landis has remembered Prinnie should not stay outdoors in the rain with his rheumatism," she told her husband as they sailed on the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*.

"It's good to be going home."

It was the last trip the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* made before the war.

It was Alfred Noyes, who had once dined with his wife at Victoria's, who proclaimed so truly:

For a city in flames is less than the fire  
That comforts you and me.

To America the first three fatal shots of the war fired in the streets of Sarajevo in an unknown Bosnia on the twenty-eighth of June meant very little. Even the whole first year of the war did not stir the country greatly. "It's a dreadful thing," Victoria said, "but if there must be a war at all, I hope that head waiter at Brown's Hotel in London is in the front-line trenches." It was not until the *Lusitania* sank in less than twenty minutes in the Irish Sea on May 7, 1915, and more than 1,100 lives were lost, including 124 Americans, that the Huns became Huns indeed and one ate liberty cabbage instead of sauerkraut. That it was in any way America's war still seemed, however, incredible. When Victoria and Landis stood shivering in Times Square watching the 1916 November election returns, which were not actually available from the whole country until two days later, they were waiting for news of the victory of the scholar of Princeton whose campaign had been largely won by the cry of "He Kept Us Out Of War."

Landis was at Columbia University getting a Master's degree in English literature, although for what reason she did not know. She did know, however, that she was

born to New York as Napoleon was born to Austerlitz. She loved it all from the Woolworth Tower to the little houses with iron porches. Later when she had tea with Frank Harris in an old house with two long galleries across the front at Seventh Avenue and Thirteenth Street, her joy knew no bounds. She was happier now than she had been in years. Victoria and Mac liked New York, too, and made three trips there while Landis was at school. They all shivered at *The Thirteenth Chair* and were enthusiastic over John Barrymore in *Peter Ibbetson* and loved the music and settings of *Maytime*. They stayed at a dignified Belmont Hotel which had never heard of Pershing Square. They went to the Hippodrome and to Jack's across the street, where the doors were never closed, and to Bustanoby's and Reisenweber's and Murray's with the revolving floor. They lunched at a Sherry's at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street and at Delmonico's just across the way. They sat at the old Waldorf at the front windows with other diners that always made them think of rich Argentines. They stood on Broadway after the theater and looked through the immense plate glass windows at the big presses turning out the *New York Herald* while the two bronze figures atop the building struck midnight. They bought books at Brentano's on Fifth Avenue at Twenty-seventh Street. Victoria purchased some of the new crystal for the table to take the place of her old-fashioned cut glass. Armstrong Mackenzie drank his whisky straight under King Cole at the Knickerbocker bar, while Victoria and Landis went on a slumming expedition to the Dutch Oven south of Washington Square. Victoria had her diamonds taken out of their old gold

settings and reset smartly in platinum. No one paid any great attention to the unobtrusive income tax law that had been passed in 1913.

On a night in early April they went to the opera to hear de Koven's *Canterbury Pilgrims*. Ober, who was singing, fainted behind the scenes. A distinguished-looking man in a box stood up and made a speech; he was James Gerard, the last Ambassador the United States ever sent to an imperial Germany.

It was the wildest night in the history of the Metropolitan Opera House since its erection in 1883. From the last seat in the topmost balcony to the Diamond Horse-shoe and the orchestra word was passed that war had been declared. Strangers kissed each other as the whole audience rose and sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." "It seems to me there was a dance the night before the Battle of Waterloo," Victoria said, as they struggled afterward for a taxi, "but we went to the opera instead. I'm going home. There is going to be work to do."

When Landis came back to the Ash house in June it was entirely changed. During her absence Victoria had had it moved farther back in the lawn and remodeled throughout with a new dining porch below with red-tiled floor and a sleeping porch above. There were new bathrooms and fireplaces. The golden oak floors had been stained dark brown. Seven coats of enamel had covered the old walnut woodwork. The big figured wallpapers had been replaced by neutral grays. Inoffensive expensive reproductions of period furniture from Grand Rapids filled the rooms. "Sherman's March to the Sea"

was gone from a parlor which was now called the drawing room, although Little James still smiled his sweet serious smile from the wall. The ebony concert grand piano which David had bought with so much pride for his daughter in the long ago had been replaced by a big new Steinway. When her husband had told Victoria it was going to be his gift to her, her face lighted with pleasure. Then her expression changed suddenly.

"Armstrong," she said, "if you don't mind, I think I'd rather have a harp. I've wanted one always."

"We'll have both," was the answer. So Victoria had her harp at last.

In the year that followed Landis knew that not only the house had changed but the whole world. In Iowa, the response to a country's call to arms was so overwhelming that entire counties avoided the draft. One-fourth of the Forty-second, or Rainbow, Division was made up of Iowa men and other Iowa troops were scattered in other organizations. When news came of the first three Americans to die in the war, one was Private Merle Hay of Glidden, Iowa. The German colony at the Amanas, a sect somewhat similar to the Amish and who did not believe in war, responded generously just as they had been among the first to send a thousand-dollar contribution to the Union in '61. A later demand of patriotism which entailed the visit of a Prohibition officer who confiscated their homemade wine by dumping it into the creek was not so well received.

The Battle Cry of Freedom was also the Battle Cry of Feed 'Em, and Iowa as never before was nature's store-

house of plenty. The farmers saw such crops as they had never known. Land changed hands for as high as \$300 an acre, although it was generally sold with a large mortgage attached. Men threshed their grain on Sundays and some ministers approved their patriotic action from the pulpit. Not only Mother Goose's cow jumped over the moon, but also hogs and their price at the packing houses. The war, including the money lent to the Allies, was costing \$36,000,000 a day, but the farmers did not need George Creel to make them feel that it was cheap at any price. Their only objection to it all was that the newfangled daylight saving made it so they did not get to town on Saturday night until ten o'clock. "God's time is better than Wilson's" was their verdict.

"There's something wrong with a country when hogs go up, and to twenty-one dollars, in dog days," Victoria commented one day to her family after a wheatless, meatless meal in the August of 1918. "This is all very well for the farmer now, but what's going to happen when it's over? He acts as though these prices were going to last forever. When he finds out they won't, how is he going to pay off the big mortgage on the new land he's bought during the war? And when he can't and the bank forecloses on him, we're going to hear a hue and cry from him for help and we're all going to have hard times. The farmers in England didn't get straightened around until thirty years after the Napoleonic Wars were over."

"The trouble with the farmer nowadays—and it was coming even before the war—is that he isn't contented to be just a farmer earning a good living. He's always railing against Wall Street, but he wants to have a Wall

Street of his own. He wants to be a businessman and a speculator. He isn't thinking about just having a comfortable house and his own apples and potatoes and canned vegetables and fruits in the cellar and meat in the smokehouse and his own woodlot. He expects to buy all these things while he prays for a bonanza year when he's going to make his fortune."

"Right now he thinks he's making it," her husband remarked.

"Yes, and he's wrong," Victoria answered. "He's planting his crops on quicksand and everything is going to sink when the war is over. And let me tell you another thing, for which even the farmer himself isn't going to be to blame. You young people sing a song now, Landis, about how you gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Paree. It's not so funny a song as you think it is. Well, how are you going to keep them there? When these boys come home, life is never going to be the same for them again. Even before they went to the war and Paris they were getting tired of the farm back home. Look at Clint Hays's boy, leaving as good a farm as there is in the country for his father to work all alone in his old age, and going off to town and clerking in a cigar store where he can wear good clothes instead of overalls six days a week. He doesn't stop to figure out that owning your own place and having a job that you can't be fired from and being your own boss and keeping your self-respect means something after all in life. If a cigar store in Cedar Rapids can get a boy away from the farm, what about Paris?"

"Sometimes I think this war is going to just about finish the farms in this country. And then again I know

I'm wrong. There have been too many times before when too many other people have thought the same thing and had plenty of statistics to prove it, just as they're going to prove it by this and that fool statement when this war is over. Machines finished the weavers and the automobile killed off the old-fashioned horse and buggy business and these new mechanical refrigerators will put the iceman out of commission before many years have passed, but food is something the world is going to go right on wanting as long as it turns on its axis.

"The farmer will never be finished, providing he keeps his head. He'll go on having his ups and downs but time makes everything even for him in the end, if he doesn't make a fool of himself in the meantime."

"Hear! Hear!" cried Landis. "Listen to the female agriculturist."

"That's just what I'm not," retorted Victoria with spirit. "I'm contented to be a plain dirt farmer, with good horse sense."

Lovely Hallie Ash was dead, her beauty betrayed by life and love and time. It had been nearly half a century since James had buried his head in the mane of Dolly the colt and wept on the night of his older sister's wedding.

It was in the early autumn of the year that Hallie died. She had been ill for months. One morning Landis was awakened by her mother in tears. "Aunt Hallie is gone?" she asked, sitting up. Victoria nodded, unable to speak. Then she sat down in a low chair by the bed.

"She died in the night and they came for me," she

said. "I've been going through her things and laying them out for her to be buried in. Oh, Landis, her few little things—only her watch with the gold face and some fine handkerchiefs and a pin James sent her once." Her tears choked her. Suddenly her voice was harsh.

"It wouldn't have mattered if it had been I," she went on, "but Hallie was brilliant like Jim. She was the smartest girl in her class at college. And Landis, she was so beautiful. You don't know how proud your grandparents were of her."

"But she had a happy life, mamma," Landis tried to comfort her. "It wasn't as exciting as yours, but she was contented."

"How do you know?" Victoria demanded fiercely. "I tell you, you don't understand. She was an Ash. I'm going to have her buried on our lot with her parents. I'm going to have her back with us again at last."

"Mamma, you can't do that. Poor Uncle Reuben wouldn't let you and she'd want to be beside the little babies that died, anyway. You mustn't feel that way."

"Nobody can tell me how I should feel," Victoria replied as she left the room.

James came home for Hallie's funeral, just as he had come home when all the others had been carried away to the green hill beyond the town. "Don't you like the things I've done to the old house?" Victoria asked him as she watched him eye the changes speculatively. "Well, I suppose it's still home," he answered sadly, "even if it has a new lock, stock and barrel. I can't get used to it. I miss the inside blinds in the parlor and the old stairs with the walnut banister and the big walnut cupboard

built in the wall in the dining room." "But the house was so inconvenient the way it was," Victoria protested. "The old stairs had a turn that was really dangerous, Jim, and the inside blinds were regular dust-catchers. And there weren't enough bathrooms or any laundry tubs in the basement." "Cellar," James corrected. "Do you remember the time the swinging shelf fell when the hooks in the ceiling pulled out and how all the neighbors came running when they heard the crash of mother's crocks and what a mess of crabapple pickles and water-melon preserves and heaven knows what else was on the dirt floor?" he laughed.

"Now you see how it was." Victoria smiled at him. "Can you see Hortense putting up with a cellar with a dirt floor? I don't like it any better than she would." "Yes, you're right. I'm sure it all looks very nice, Vicky. I don't blame you for being proud of it," James conceded, although there was still regret in his voice.

There was silence between the brother and sister while each was lost in thoughts of the past. Then James asked with a sudden chuckle:

"Do you still have the silver covered butter dish with the place in the bottom for ice?" "Yes," Victoria answered, "and the silver spoon holder and the cake dish with the high standard."

"Sometimes when Hortense and I have guests we have champagne," James went on, "but no matter how rare a vintage it is, it never seems half so wonderful as that butter dish with its ice seemed to me when we had it on the table for company."

"I know, Jim," Victoria answered. "I know."

One morning James expressed a desire to see Frank Gresley. "I haven't seen him for forty-five years, I suppose," he said. "Do you know anything about him?" Victoria replied that she had not seen him herself since she was a child. She knew, however, that he still lived on the old Gresley place, although his wife had died some years before. "We'll drive over there this afternoon," Victoria promised. "Some of those roads across the river are bad, but a car can make it all right in this kind of weather."

They were late in starting. It was not until sunset that they neared the old Gresley place. On either side of them lay the fields in all the glory of the fullness of lush harvest. Any man who could look upon them and know that they were the fruit of his toil could feel the thrill of high achievement. "Jim, do you remember the white kid gloves Frank used to wear at first to save his hands?" Jim nodded. "No man ever worked those with gloves on." He pointed to the rich fields.

As they rounded a corner of the winding road they came upon a man walking in the direction they were going. James stopped the car. "Can you tell us if we're going the right way to reach Frank Gresley's place?" he asked. The man nodded. He was elderly, somewhat stooped, with a short beard. "Is there anything I can do for you? I'm Frank Gresley."

There was absolute silence except for the sound of the motor. Victoria looked at the old man and thought: "It isn't possible. It just isn't possible." Then she knew that it was quite possible and that the quiet, self-assured voice of the old farmer was still that of the Frank Gresley whose aunt had had the finest furs in Ottawa—finer even than

those of the wife of the Governor General—and whose grandfather had been Sir Rowland Gresley whose broad lawns stretched down to the Thames.

It was James who explained who they were and why they had come. "Why, Jimmy Ash," Frank cried, "to think I didn't know you. It's because you've lost your red hair. I'll get in with you and we'll ride on to the house. My daughter will have supper on the table in no time for us."

The Gresley house was practically unchanged from the way James remembered it in childhood, although it was now almost hidden by fine big barns and silos and numerous outbuildings, all of which gleamed with white paint.

"Come in," Frank said hospitably, as he led them into a small low-ceilinged room which served obviously as both dining room and sitting room. "Gretchen, come see who's here."

Gretchen, his daughter, was the child of her mother rather than of her father. She, too, was hospitable, however, and was disappointed when Victoria and James said they could not stay for supper.

"Yes, Father has been dead many years," Frank said in response to a question from James. "And Vashti, too, dear girl. She was thrown from her horse the year after she left here. She never came back from England. You remember Vashti, don't you?" he asked Victoria.

It seemed to Victoria that the day with Vashti on the cliff above the river had been only yesterday. All these years she had been dead, and she had never known. Suddenly she wanted to cry.

"Yes," she answered, and had difficulty in keeping her voice steady. "She was—she was my friend."

"I have a son, too," Frank went on, "but he's no farmer like me."

"What does he do?" James inquired.

Frank Gresley straightened his stooped shoulders and pride was in his voice. "He builds bridges," he said. "They say he is one of the best builders of bridges in all Canada."

James and Victoria were silent on their way home. Both were thinking that time was the greatest of all masters of legerdemain.

In a little more than a month the telephones rang in the trenches as they had rung hundreds and thousands of times before, but this time they rang with the message that firing cease; no more Battle and Murder and Sudden Death, Over There; no more saving of peach stones and hoarding of tinfoil, over here. The war to end all wars was ended. And in the years to come the cynics and the debunkers and the wise men told a disillusioned America that she had been made the pawn of the munitions makers and the marionette of the moneylenders.

But that November day when a United States of America went mad with the joy of righteous victory, they knew that every man they had sent to a foreign shore had been a Son of God gone forth to war to save mankind. Perhaps they were right . . . perhaps.

Victoria laid down her knitting needles with the satisfying realization that every sock that had gone from her

Red Cross department had been correct in every detail, from the top purling to the Kitchener toe, "even," as she explained privately to her family, "if I did have to ravel a lot of them out and do them over myself."

Landis began to get ready to go to New York. She was holding James to his promise to find her work of some sort in a publishing house there. Victoria was inconsolable and utterly at a loss to see why she wanted to go. It was Armstrong Mackenzie who proved Landis's unexpected ally.

"But why does she want to leave her good home, Armstrong?" a bewildered Victoria asked.

"Because she's your daughter," the wise Scotch-Irishman answered. "She has nothing to do and she isn't any more contented that way than you would be. Let her go."

"And think what good times we'll have when you two come to spend a month with me every now and then," Landis said as she started eastward after the New Year's Day of 1919.

They did have good times, glorious ones. Victoria and Mac would descend on Landis's small apartment with trunks and suitcases and boxes like an avalanche. Sometimes they were on their way abroad or to Bermuda or to Canada; sometimes they came just for a visit. "I do wish your apartment weren't so small," Victoria would mourn. "I never will learn to be a Pullman porter and make a bed with one side against the wall. And it's not respectable to live in a town where you can't shake a dustcloth out of the window."

They went to see Frank Bacon in *Lightnin'* and laughed until they cried at Ina Claire in *The Gold Digi-*

gers and were delighted with George Arliss in *The Green Goddess* and Laura Hope Crews in *Mr. Pim Passes By* and Lenore Ulric in *Kiki* and hummed "Alice Blue Gown" after they saw *Irene*. They drove in a hansom through the Park and went often to dinner to a Mouquin's whose doors Prohibition had not closed. Victoria ordered a couple of dresses from Thurn's. ("Yes, I know, but think how long they'll last me," she said.) They did other things, too, while the handsome Elk, Warren G. Harding, urged back to normalcy a world in which short-haired women smoked cigarettes in long holders and people played mah-jongg and read *This Side of Paradise* and the hurdy-gurdies ground out "Avalon."

"I always told you I was just a country bumpkin," Victoria told Landis after they were settled for their first visit. "I've been coming to New York for years and except for walking across Brooklyn Bridge, there hasn't ever been time to do any of the things I really want to do. Now I'm going to do them."

So on warm evenings after Landis came from the office they rode to Staten Island and back on the ferryboat. One Sunday they all went down the harbor to see the Statue of Liberty, and another up to the Bronx Zoo in the subway. They went to Coney Island where Victoria was so fascinated by the babies in their incubators that Mac and Landis could hardly drag her away. They even went to Chinatown in a sightseeing bus, although Landis suffered horribly while they waited for it to start. "Someone I know might come along and see us," she protested. "What of it?" Victoria retorted. "You're going to have a most awful time in this world if you let yourself be

ruled by fear of what somebody is going to say. I've never forgotten what I read is carved over George Bernard Shaw's fireplace in his Adelphi Terrace house. It reads: 'Thay say. What say thay? Let tham say.' I wish I'd had it carved over mine."

"Yes, but I'm not George Bernard Shaw," Landis pointed out. "Maybe he can let tham say, but that doesn't mean that everyone else can."

Victoria sniffed disdainfully and went on enjoying the passing Broadway crowds until the woman decoy had filled the bus and it rolled southward.

Since there was no experience Victoria would miss if she could help it, she even went with Mac and Landis to a speak-easy where the air was foul and the liquor more so. Mac drank something that was alleged to be the real McCoy and right off a boat. Landis had bath-tub gin and Victoria—to the bartender's amazement—ordered lemonade. What had just come off the boat had none of the authority of the corn liquor at home, Mac pronounced, and certainly it was a great deal more expensive.

"I never supposed I'd have to stick somebody's card through a peephole in a door to get a drink like this," he said in disgust. "And to think that once civilized people made it a point to have just the right white Burgundy with the fish and a good Pommard or Beaune with the roast and Château la Mission Haut-Brion with the cheese. Now—"

"Now you're probably drinking something that is making you blind," Victoria interrupted. "As for you, Landis—well, I never thought I'd live to see the day a

daughter of mine would hold a liquor glass in her hand. You never had a drink in your life until Prohibition."

"Oh, yes, I did. Don't forget the time at Uncle James's when President Taft came to dinner and Uncle James introduced me to him as his niece, the prairie rose. I guzzled champagne all through the meal in a vain attempt to drown my vast youthful embarrassment."

"It's a funny thing the way Prohibition has turned out." Victoria sipped her lemonade meditatively. "I still think your grandmother and the W.C.T.U. were right. And yet all Carrie Nation seems to have done with her hatchet was to send respectable people to places like this. Prohibition's turned out as unexpectedly as a squirt of grapefruit juice in your eye. I did think when the distilleries shut down and the breweries closed—"

"You forgot that while there's life there's hops, and that the one way to get people to do things is to tell them they can't." Landis was tired. "Let's get out of here. The place is stifling. And I'm bored with looking at Vesuvius on the verge. Every speak-easy in New York has one on the wall. I wish they'd all erupt and cover up the inevitable dusty grape arbor and the unescapable piano player and the ever-lasting breadsticks. And why are all the proprietors always called Tony?"

"Talking of hops made me think of Mr. Wallace and those he used to raise in Hillview," Victoria recalled while Mac was waiting for the change—if any—from the bill he had given the waiter. "He lived in that old brick house back of the chapel. There were a few acres attached to the house at that time and he grew hops on them. He kept a fire in the cellar of the little frame house in the

back, and dried them on the top floor. They were sent to some concern in the East. Some of the godly criticized Mr. Wallace for this, pointing out that he was party to an unholy traffic. But he said he didn't know whether they were used for yeast for bread or malt."

"That all sounds like Hillview," was Landis's comment. "I suppose people are still talking about it even if it did happen before I was born."

After Victoria learned not to be afraid of the gas range, she developed a sudden penchant for cooking, although the prices of eggs and milk and cream horrified her. One day she made a fluffy angel-food cake heavy with English walnuts and displayed it proudly to Landis on her return from the office. "I haven't had a really decent piece of cake in all this town," she explained. "See how nicely it stands up? I know the pastries at Voisin's are wonderful, but they aren't old-fashioned cake. Now what do you want to do? Shall we go to the Plaza for dinner or to Roversi's for ravioli or would you rather eat here?"

"I'd rather stay at home," Landis replied. "And, Vicky, do you suppose you could make some dried-beef gravy? I don't mean pale chipped beef. I mean gravy all nice and dark brown. I cherish this town, but nobody in it knows how to make proper dried-beef gravy. You can talk about noix d'agneau à l'Impérial at the Colony or sole Marguery at the Brevoort or honey from the Black Sea or chicken divan—I'll admit that last is good with its layers of baked ham and sliced chicken on corn bread and mushrooms and Parmesan cheese in the sauce—but none of them can touch the dried-beef gravy we have at home. If Brillat-Savarin ever made it, I know it was

exactly like that which comes out of our kitchen."

"I'm not much of a cook but I can make that at any rate," Victoria answered. "I thought perhaps you'd rather have dinner here, so I sent Mac to First Avenue this afternoon for some peas. I'd rather have had corn, but the corn on the cob you get here doesn't taste right to me, somehow, and I miss it. Do you remember how Kate used to come home from Munich every three or four years because she said she couldn't stand it any longer not to have a good ear of corn? I told her she was almost as bad as Billy Mott. He ate six ears at once at the hotel in Springville and when he paid his bill it was only fifteen cents. They told him they charged thirty-five cents to feed a man, but only fifteen for a horse."

They all stayed at home and ate at the card table. Afterward they sat and talked while Victoria worked on a lampshade she was making for Landis's living room. They might have been twelve hundred miles away in Hillview. Victoria hoped they had had rain there and planned a letter she would write to the electric company about running a wire for an electric fan into the old Blakely cottage where poor Millie Blakely lay dying in the merciless heat of an Iowa summer. Landis tried on her new dress and Victoria refused to approve of it. "All these new Chanel models are ugly, shapeless things," she said, "and the hips are no place for a woman's belt."

Victoria in New York was a child with a new toy. Landis said she was always expecting her to pop up out of some manhole or end up in the Tombs. "I believe you know intimately every taxi driver in town," she said. "Give me time and I will," Victoria retorted. "And let

me tell you this, my girl. If you don't like my friends I'll pack my things and move to the hotel with James. He likes to know all sorts of people, too, even if you and Mac think you are too grand." Victoria became acquainted also with the town's few remaining cabbies, for she loved driving through the park in the old hansom cabs stationed at the Plaza. She came home full of tales of how most of the cabs, including one in which John Wendel used to ride, had ended in Bermuda. "Some of them sold for only five and ten dollars," she said. "It just doesn't seem possible when you think of how we used to ride everywhere in them."

She ferreted out John Seymour, New York's Old Lavender Man on Second Avenue, who had been selling fragrance to the town by trayfuls ever since the Gay Nineties. She was gone so long on this expedition that Mac had become alarmed. She explained that she had become so interested in listening to Mr. Seymour's stories of all the people from Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish to Anna Held who had bought lavender from him that she had not realized how late it was. She loved all the women's shops, of course, but others fascinated her also. She reveled in truffles and Beluga caviar and English Stilton cheese flavored with port wine at Charles', and then hurried over to Ninth Avenue to Paddy's Market where she had another friend. He sang *Traviata* for her behind his pushcart and told her about his new bambino while she purchased strawberries from him for ten cents a box. "I've bought some wool to knit booties for his baby," she told her family. "I think Tony will be ever so surprised and pleased when I take them to him."

She persuaded Mac to spend a day with her at City Island which reminded them both of Provincetown. She insisted that he go with her to see the English prison ship that was anchored off the Battery. She thought it dreadful, but wondered if it had not been brought here as Irish propaganda. She took Mac also on a tour of the town's cemeteries. "I want to see all the best tombstones because I want to decide about one for Rob," she explained. "Perhaps it seems queer that I've never put one up all these years, but it was because I've never found one that I thought was quite good enough for him." Mac took these cemetery expeditions as a matter of course and was sympathetic and helpful just as Victoria had been when he had put up a memorial fountain on the Crollon campus for his first wife.

"Don't you ever get tired?" Landis asked her mother in amazement and awe after weeks of these activities.

"No, never," Victoria answered. "That is, not unless I'm bored. And I don't let myself get that. There isn't any excuse for being bored when there are so many interesting things to see and do in the world."

"Vicky, why don't you come here to live? You like the town."

"No, it wouldn't do," Victoria replied without hesitation. "I wouldn't be happy here always. I want to live where I can see the white clover peeping up in the green lawn and the fireflies in the garden on hot summer nights and the bright red bittersweet in the country in the fall. I—I want to be where I can lean over and pick a blade of squeak grass and make a noise with it when I feel like it! And then Lorena and I are going to plan the furnish-

ings for the girls' new dormitory at the college. No, it wouldn't do."

One night when Landis came back to the apartment she found her mother reading *Main Street*. Hitherto Victoria had steadfastly refused to open the book. She had said that she knew from the reviews that she would be disgusted. "And it is just as horrid as I expected," she told Landis as she threw it down on the couch. "I'd like to tell that man Lewis a thing or two. I'd like to have him know about our Dr. Norton. Right on the very first page of this dreadful book it says that the pious families of Iowa are sending their children to schools which are still combating the heresies of Voltaire and Robert Ingersoll and Darwin. Why, Dr. Norton has been teaching evolution right there at home in the college for fifty years and he says he's never heard a murmur from any of the parents in what you young smart alecks call the Bible belt, or from other professors or boards of education or anybody."

"Dr. Norton is a diplomat," Landis retorted, and smiled as she remembered the little man in his trim gray suits whose classes she had attended. "You know it isn't fair to call him an example of Main Street. He's one of the best geologists in the country and a businessman as well. They say he's made a great deal of money and given it all to the college. He claims his knowledge of geology has helped him in placing his investments. He taught me a lot of interesting things, but he never included that in any of the courses I took from him."

Victoria was not to be sidetracked. "I'd like to write a book myself and call it *The Other Side of Main Street*,"

she went on. "I'd show this Lewis that we aren't all as hopelessly Philistine as he tries to make out. I'd tell him about the time one of the Rigby boys came in from the field and told his wife to get ready to go to Chicago. She reminded him of all the farm work to be done but he said to never mind that. He'd just heard that Matthew Arnold was going to lecture in Chicago and they mustn't miss hearing him."

"That was a long time ago and he was a farmer and not a Main-Streeter, anyway," Landis teased.

"Well, I guess Robert Cousins down in the county seat is a Main-Streeter," Victoria retorted. "He lives in rooms over one of the stores. I'd put in my book how on summer nights when the windows are open you can hear him playing Bach and Schubert and Grieg up there on his old-fashioned phonograph. There's a dance hall across the street and when he hears the popular tunes he's infuriated."

"Poor Bob." It was Mac who sighed for his old friend. "It's been a long time since they called him the silver-tongued orator and he made his famous speech in Congress about the *Maine*. It was quoted in the newspapers not only all over this country but also abroad. He's going blind now with cataracts on his eyes and sitting there in the dark playing his phonograph."

"Yes, poor Bob," said Victoria and was silent for a moment. Then once more her mind was bent on thwarting Sinclair Lewis.

"I'm sick and tired of a lot of fool notions people have about the Middle West generally," she went on. "You'd think the whole place had been settled by ignoramuses.

I'd have them know that the pioneers brought with them their leather-bound classics as well as almanacs, and that they read them, too. We may say tomatotoes instead of tomohtoes but our fathers and mothers didn't all sit around in homemade rockers with patchwork cushions and stir straw ticks and act folksy. Look at Margaret's beautiful desk her grandparents bought in Paris, which came to New Orleans and up the Mississippi on a boat and then overland. And—" She stopped as she looked with dismay at the clock. "I had no idea how late it was. James wants us to have dinner with him at the Belmont. I'm glad his practice keeps him so much in New York now, and we can see him often. I must get dressed."

Victoria had one parting shot to give. "I just want to tell you this," she said as she rose from her chair. "If we want to say tomatotoes nobody has a better right. We ought to know how to pronounce the word for we introduced them to the rest of the country. Only at first we called them love apples and thought they were poison."

While Landis sat waiting for her mother, she mused on the miracle that was Victoria. What strange alchemy had made her what she was? From David she had undoubtedly inherited her love of adventure. From Elizabeth had come her vast ambition. Her charm was a gift from the gracious graceless drunkard Robin who had been her grandfather. But whence came that driving force, that vision to conceive and ability to execute? Landis could imagine no equation short of one containing the  $\times$  of death which Victoria could not solve if determined upon it. Was it some legacy from grim Captain Richard lying so long in his last narrow bed? Why had it waited over

two hundred years to bestow itself on another of his house? Had all the Ashes between been as prosaic and uninteresting as the dull and scanty family annals made them appear? Or had they, too, led storybook lives only there had been none to record their stories? What was heredity, anyway? How explain Shakespeare? What of Lincoln whose shiftless stepbrother was so much better born? It was all beyond her.

The hotel where James and Mac and Victoria and Landis dined so happily and so well lives today only in memory, even as the Manhattan across the way, the Knickerbocker where Caruso made his home for years, the Holland House and many another New York hostelry where men took their ease. Even on the night the three had dinner with James the glory of the old Belmont was fading. Already gone was its famous bar which boasted the finest free lunch in the country. Beneath the vaulted ceiling of the great room had been offered gratis to patrons chicken salad and lobster à la Newburg, lettuce and mayonnaise, olives, pickles, sardines and other tempting delicacies. Men—and no women—sat in the squatly little chairs round the black-oak tables and drank the Doctor cocktails, the Pineapple Bronxes, the Cloverleafs, the Orleans fizzes. None would have guessed then that the famous room would end ignobly as a cafeteria and that the hotel itself would be razed in 1930.

The Belmont bar was famous, but it never took in \$7,000 in a single day as did the Fifth Avenue Hotel at Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets on the day of its closing. The money which poured in was practically

all for hard liquor. No beer was sold and there was no time for mixed drinks. The hotel, which closed in April, 1908, was not famous for its bar alone. In its heyday it harbored presidents, princes, potentates. Here James Ash had once mingled with frock-coated lawyers and politicians. Tom Platt saw to it that the plans made within the walls of the Fifth Avenue received proper attention in either Albany or Washington. It was he who brought into being the famous Amen Corner, the bench in the main corridor from which the big politicians took orders and the lesser ones hung about waiting to receive theirs in turn. Roscoe Conkling, Chester Alan Arthur, James G. Blaine, and Chauncey Depew all made history in the hotel. Every President from Buchanan to McKinley stayed here when in New York. Lincoln made a famous speech from the balcony over its entrance. General Grant once held a Cabinet meeting here.

It was at the old Fifth Avenue Hotel, too, that luckless lovely Lizzie Hazeldean used to meet her lover, and was seen by old Sillerton Jackson when she fled from a New Year's Day fire.

A block to the north of the Fifth Avenue was the Hoffman House, also known throughout the country. Here, too, came the rich and the great and the famous. Grover Cleveland lived here when elected for a second term.

Farther down the island was the Astor House at Broadway, Vesey and Barclay streets. Here Squire Ash had come as a young man, and here Hallie's prince, later Edward VII, had stopped in 1860. Grand Duke Alex had had a suite, and many another famous personage. The Astor House, erected in 1836, was the last big hotel to be

built in the vicinity of the Battery. It closed its doors in 1913 when the subway beneath made a continuance of business impracticable, but its horseshoe bar is still remembered regretfully by many a former patron.

Nirvana gapes for all that is earthly. Old New York is gone, and with it the men and women who loved it and whom in turn it loved. Only the oldsters remember Foxhall Keene, the prodigal spender; Freddy Gebhart, Langtry's friend; Parnell, the artist; Thorley, the florist with the carnation in his lapel; William Sydney Porter, whom the world knows as O. Henry; Richard Harding Davis, the storybook reporter, and Frank Ward O'Malley, the reporter whose stories might have made a book; Kid McCoy, who married many women and fought many men and looked handsomer than any of them in tails and white tie; James Huneker, the pontifical; Billy Guard, the Metropolitan's dignified press agent who read Voltaire and appeared in the foyer of the opera house in white-lined Inverness, silk dicer at a jaunty angle, and swinging a gold-headed cane.

All these, like the vanished hostelries that knew them, belonged to another day. Another day? No, to another world in which you were a tadpole and I was a fish. They are as lost to us as Lispenard's last meadow or Josie Mansfield's fascinations, as Dolly Gray and Bedelia and Foxy Grandpa and Mr. Dooley and Buster Brown and the Yellow Kid and Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay. If Saint-Gaudens's Diana could hunt again atop her leveled Garden, she would never know the town. Under wrecker and reaper it has, like Harry Von Tilzer's Wurzburger, gone "down, down, down but nobody knows where it goes."

In its place have come the topless towers of a new Ilium and a people who think merely of the World of Tomorrow.

Only the old ailanthus trees in a few back yards continue to send out their feathery greenery in springtime, unconscious that each season may be their last.

When Landis went home during vacations it was almost as though she had never been away, and yet year by year she noticed changes. No longer did the thinning ranks of the G.A.R. march to the cemetery on a Decoration Day that was now called Memorial Day. There were no more of the bountiful twenty-five-cent suppers given by the Women's Relief Corps under the steel engravings of the Civil War generals in the old G.A.R. hall. Everyone had forgotten how excited the town had been when Joe Butler was sent home after he'd had yellow jack in Tampa in '98, for it was the Legion boys of the A.E.F. who were in the limelight today.

Uncle Reuben did not have to ring the fire bell now, for a fire siren sounded when the operator in the telephone office pushed a signal; and instead of the hose cart which the volunteers had dragged manfully by its tongue there was an efficient little fire engine mounted on an automobile truck. The "seedling mile" on the Lincoln Highway which had been completed the year of the war had grown until many of the roads were paved and all were passable. It no longer took a farmer all day to drive six miles to town and back in muddy weather. David's schoolhouse had followed his church and Landis wondered if in the big new building were any pupils who

loved *The Idylls of the King* enough to name a baby for the lily maid. The church choir sang in vestments now and nobody thought that Rome was stretching out its tentacles. The so-called cathedral seats in Crollon Chapel made her think of a breakfast nook. There was talk of letting the students have dances in the gymnasium and none suggested they be conducted along the lines of the Promenades of Hallie's day. President Parr was no longer head of the college, although in his eighties he went spryly off on long business trips for the school and was greatly annoyed when the Board of Trustees insisted someone accompany him.

Most of all Landis missed the seven-foot-high dappled horse that had stood so proudly in the big window of the harness shop. "Tom has had to put in a line of working-men's shoes," Victoria explained. "He couldn't make a living at the harness business any more." Landis remembered how Tom and his father before him had always been among the first and most generous to contribute to church and college and any cause that Hillview citizens considered worthy; now Tom was trying to earn a living selling shoes to a town that already had one shoe store and needed no other. She sighed.

There were still other and deeper changes, it seemed to Landis. One morning she tried to tell Victoria about them when she came down to breakfast. Her mother was putting a bowl for Prinnie on the red-tiled floor of the eating porch that opened off Elizabeth's bow window.

"I hear the whole town is talking about Prinnie's breakfast," Victoria remarked. "I understand it's a public scandal because I waste three soft-boiled eggs on him

every morning. What I choose to feed my dog is nobody's business but my own. I tell you, Landis, as long as I have an egg to eat myself every morning I intend to see that old Prinnie has his. It's all he can eat now his teeth are gone."

"That's just it, Vicky—things like the whole town's talking about what you give a dog to eat. This place is as bad for gossip as the pump room at Bath during the Georges. It's a nasty-minded, back-biting place. Look at all the things you do for people and then they're ready to give you a stab in the back whenever they can."

"Well," Victoria replied, "my back has been getting broader and broader all these years and I guess I can stand a good many stabs and not mind it much. Anyway, people don't mean half the things they say. Landis, don't you like your home any more?"

"I like my home all right, but I don't like its surroundings. Vicky, the whole town has gone cheap. It isn't Hillview any more; it's just a tenth-rate imitation of New York—or what people think New York is as they imagine it from the movies and the radio."

"But hasn't the whole country gone cheap, as you express it? Isn't the same thing true of all the little towns?"

"Yes, I suppose so, but Hillview had more to lose than most little towns—towns like Brandsville, for instance. The Hillview of Grandfather and Grandmother Ash and even of my own childhood was provincial enough certainly, but it was sincere and honest with itself and it wasn't ashamed to be. People dared to be themselves instead of trying to be cheap imitations of somebody else they'd read or heard about. They cared for education and

culture for their own sakes instead of regarding them as something to show off.

"There aren't any Colonel Roods or Mary Fancher Moodys or Charles Charlwoods left in Hillview today. Colonel Rood could have gone anywhere and been recognized as a polished, cultured gentleman. Mrs. Moody would have been at home at the Court of St. James's and have put Queen Mary herself at ease if she needed putting. Charles Charlwood could have gone among the ablest men of his profession and held his own, and delighted in telling them that he was just a country chap who sat on a cracker box in Ed Goodhue's grocery store at home."

"The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?" Victoria smiled tolerantly.

"Yes, where is she? Where are they all?" Landis demanded heatedly. "It's certain they're not in Hillview any more among the country clubbers and the bridge players."

"Come, come, give Hillview time," Victoria tried to placate her. "We'll grow another crop to take the place of the old one."

"It will take Hillview a good long time before it grows another Lady Cedarleigh," was Landis's parting shot as she rose from the table. "Come on, Public Scandal," she called to Prinnie. "If your mistress were wise, she'd feed you your breakfast in the basement or out in the barn where nobody would see the sinful waste of your three soft-boiled eggs. Vicky may have lived here all her life, but she hasn't learned yet that when you're in Rome you must do as the Romans do, and that means in Hillview

doing whatever you want to do in the dark where nobody's going to find out about it."

Thousands of letters passed between Victoria and Landis those years after Landis left home. In one Victoria told of the breakfast she gave for the portly Mr. Taft who had been President and who was James's friend. "I had heard of a possum over at Madrid," she wrote, "and I made up my mind to get it for him, for I knew he was very fond of it. We served it with cranberries for eyes and garnished with sweet potatoes around it. First we had grapefruit with two beautiful strawberries on top. Lorena brought them from Chicago for me. Then the possum was brought in and exhibited whole and taken out and carved in the kitchen. When it was brought back there was also fried chicken. We had sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes baked without the skins, corn bread and warm white rolls, gooseberry jam, coffee and doughnuts. I assure you the ex-President ate very plentifully. He took meat twice, corn bread twice, also, and the warm rolls. You see, as Lorena said, it was the novelty of it all—the possum was different—and I slipped one over on Lorena by finding it in Madrid.

"I had a nice fire in the grate. Red roses in the drawing room and chrysanthemums of pale pink in the blue bowl in the dining room.

"We were all delighted with Mr. Taft. No one thought of him as the ex-President but as an entertaining, brainy gentleman who was so friendly, so gracious in his manner that we all felt at once that we knew him.

"At night the college gave a banquet for him in the

gymnasium, but I was not there except behind the curtain in my gingham apron helping the Ladies' Aid Society who served the meal. Afterward I brought all the Aid Society silver home and Mrs. Joyce and I were up till two o'clock washing and counting it here.

"I forgot to tell you that something will have to be done about the drawing room carpet, because we neglected to put the screen up when we all went out to the possum breakfast. A coal dropped out and burned a hole. Never mind—I'd rather have had it happen than never use my fireplaces the way Hortense does. A fireplace in winter without a fire makes me think of a beautiful woman who has no soul."

In another letter to Landis Victoria wrote of the May Music Festival: "I took our Bohemian Anna to the afternoon orchestra concert. I found that she had bought seats on the stairs for all of her children. They love music and her oldest daughter is studying to teach it. You'll remember that Anna's father used to play the organ in the little Catholic church across the river. Anna looked so well in her black dress and she was so happy to be at the concert with me. She said she couldn't afford to buy a ticket for herself after she'd sent the children.

"Talking of music (yes, we have no bananas), when you see your hurdy-gurdy woman, tell her I'll have your old cape ready to send to her next week. I've had it relined, and a good warm inner lining put in. I'm so glad you bought a new fur coat. I think you should get another dress to wear to the office—a serge or gabardine with braid trimming. Pay at least a hundred dollars for it. You can't afford to get one that costs less. Remember

it never pays to buy cheap-john clothes.

"You'll be sorry to hear that we won't see old Billy Conklin down at the quarry any more, or the big sulphur matches sticking in the band of his battered old felt hat. He died last week—a good man and a good citizen, even if Bridget did have her trials with him. You know about the time he came home on the cowcatcher, don't you? Perhaps not, because it happened long before you were born. He was coming home from the county fair when his buggy was struck by a Chicago & North-Western train. When Billy told about it afterward, he said that when he saw the train coming he didn't know whether to jump on the embankment or the cowcatcher, but be jabbers, he decided on the cowcatcher. He rode five or six miles on it, and when the train pulled into the station, he was still holding his jug in his lap.

"I won't write more now for I must work on Mrs. Ballinger's club paper. She came to me almost crying and said she just didn't know how to go about it. It's a joke, because you know I've never felt I was smart enough to belong to any of those literary clubs. I wrote Mrs. Ralph's paper last year, too, but she and Mrs. Ballinger belong to different clubs so I guess no one will get on to my literary style.

"There is one thing I must tell you before I close. It's the funniest thing I've heard in a long time. I'm almost beginning to agree with you when you say that in Hillview the unforgivable sin is to wear or eat or think anything different from other people. Last night Ellen stopped in for just a moment and asked if I wanted to read *The Red Lily* by Anatole France. She said she

couldn't let me have it longer than this morning, however, for she had promised to get it to Frances today and then Frances was to give it to Mary after she'd finished it. I told her I didn't want it because there was a copy of yours around the house and that when I'd tried to read it last summer, I hadn't liked it. Then I asked her why in the world all these females were rushing through it on schedule. It seems that their club ordered it for review, but when it came, Lois, who was to do a paper on it, decided that it was much too immoral. The good ladies were all eager to read it privately, however, so it's been traveling around in a plain brown paper cover from one member to another. They've all been thumbing it through avidly up in their cold attics and down in their dark cellars and behind the locked doors of their bathrooms while the roasts burned and the babies howled in vain for their bottles. I think myself that the bathroom is just the place for *The Red Lily*—convenient to the sewerage. It seemed to me a nasty thing not worth wasting my time on.

"But if I had wanted to read it, you can better believe I wouldn't have minded sitting right out on the front curb with it in my hand. I'd be ashamed to read a book I had to hide with behind a locked door until Armstrong decided I had cholera morbus. For private reading, the old mail-order catalogue was safer and certainly a whole lot more interesting."

Then came a postscript with a truly Victorian question. "I was interested in your account of meeting Mrs. Leeds—Princess Anastasia. But you didn't tell me something I'd like to know. What did she wear?"

Once Victoria voiced her sadness over the fact that Landis did not go to church. Victoria and Mac had gone to morning services every Sunday they were in New York. "I know you want to rest on your day off from work," she wrote, "but I don't like to see you getting farther and farther from all religious forms. You don't have to believe everything you hear preached in a pulpit, you know. If you'll recall, I was never very enthusiastic over the revival meetings we indulged in every winter, even if I did generally house and feed the revivalist. Perhaps I was prejudiced by something which happened when I was a girl. A woman got religion so wholeheartedly that after the meeting she stood on the corner of Main and Depot streets and confessed that she'd been the sub rosa friend of practically all the leading citizens. She even said Edward Franklin was the father of her youngest child. Of course, nobody believed her because he was a pillar of the church, but it did seem strange all her other children were so ugly and the baby was a golden-haired little beauty. She and her husband moved away soon afterward and some people were mean enough to whisper that Ed paid their fare out west. I've never been keen on revivals since, and I don't believe Ed has been, either."

"It doesn't seem right to me, though, that people use the church only as a convenience for christenings and weddings and funerals. You don't go to church any more, but would you like to live in a country where there were no churches? How would you enjoy living in Russia?"

Again Victoria wrote: "You know poor little Frankie Waldron is almost bald. Such a tragedy for a sensitive child, and he is so handsome, too. I took him to the clinic

at Iowa City and they gave me an ointment which they think will help his scalp. I have him come here every night to rub it in. His mother is too busy. She's one of the best neighbors I ever had, and it's the least I can do for her."

"I wonder if they all really knew what she did for them," Landis said to herself as she read the letters in afteryears. Then she turned to a letter written to her after her mother's death by that same Leslie Shaw with whom Victoria had once said she would not ride again in an automobile even if he were Alexander Hamilton himself.

"It has been a long time since my old eyes have been wet with tears at the death of a friend," the letter ran, "but your letter telling of the passing of your dear mother and my beloved friend opened again the floodgates. The best-beloved woman in Hillview is gone and it seems to me that you and I are the two most bereaved."

"Yes," was Landis's final verdict, "I suppose it was all worth while." Then she smiled to think that Victoria would not have cared whether it was worth while or not; she would have done it all anyway because she could not help it.

One day there was no letter for Landis. Then came a telegram. Once more the pattern was broken.

So quick bright things come to confusion.

Victoria was ill. When Landis arrived in Hillview she knew that she was very ill indeed, although in a few weeks the doctors gave the assurance that her mother might live

a long time "with care." "And I'm going to live," Victoria said with all her old four-o'clock-in-the-morning courage. "You think I won't be careful of my heart, but I will be. First we have the rocking horse and then we're rocking the boat and finally all of us end up in the rocking chair, but I'm not going to sit by the fire with the grannies yet. I may have to get other people to do the running but I won't mind if I can only keep on with the planning. I love the world too much to leave it; or you, Landis, or James or Armstrong."

It was decided that the following winter Mac should take Victoria to California during the severe months. It was here, strangely enough, that she had her last contact with the Anna whom she had loved dearly for so many years. "I did not know she was here until our old iceman, who had moved out here along with all the retired preachers and farmers in Iowa, came to see me," she wrote Landis. "When dear Anna learned she had an incurable disease she persuaded her husband that this female evangelist in Los Angeles could help her. Tony sold his good farm and stock and everything else he had at a loss and brought her here. He knew nothing could help Anna but he did it for her sake, and I shall respect him for it always. . . . As soon as I found out where they were living, I had Armstrong take me in a taxi. When we got there Tony was alone in the little yard crying. 'Is Anna gone?' I asked and he nodded because he couldn't speak. I haven't felt so sad in years."

It was while Victoria was in the West that James fell ill with the same malady that had stricken his sister. From the first there seemed but little hope and Victoria herself

realized it, although she would not admit it. "Oh, Armstrong," she said, "I can stand anything except to lose James. I cannot have him die. They say I cannot go to him but if I were only there I know I could help him."

Pitiful letters went back and forth three thousand miles between the two. Victoria would write James every day, begging him to conserve his strength and to try this and that diet which she had found helpful. James would reply briefly on yellow tablets with pencil, because it was "easier" to write that way. "Oh, his poor handwriting!" Victoria would cry. "In the bank I used to see a customer's signature on his check change from year to year and I knew things about his health long before his doctor did. That isn't my Jim's old handwriting. He's so terribly ill, Armstrong, and I am so far away. Whatever shall I do without him? He understands as no one else ever did. He even understood when Prinnie died. I've kept the letter he wrote me then. I've leaned on James all my life."

One day James would write philosophically that there were kings before Agamemnon and that there would be lawyers after he was gone. "I'd rather die than live to be senile and be 'pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw.'" In his next letter he would be fuming at the work piling up in his office and worrying over the cases he wanted to try. Then again he would write simply: "I am all right. I am ready to die."

"It isn't true," Victoria wept. "No Ash is ever ready to die."

James died one winter morning before Victoria went back to Iowa. A month after their return Armstrong Mackenzie died suddenly in his sleep.

Landis expected to find her mother tragically shaken and perhaps fatally ill when she hurried home to her. Instead she found her more like the old Victoria than she had been at any time since the beginning of her own illness.

"No, I am going to be all right," Victoria protested after the funeral, and indeed she seemed so. "And there are so many things I have to do."

"Let me do them for you," Landis begged.

"No," Victoria answered. "There is only one thing I want you to help me about. I don't dare go to the city alone. I want the smartest and most expensive mourning I can buy. I owe it to James and Armstrong. Take me to Chicago."

They went to Chicago and Victoria came back with her still young, eager face framed by the white ruche of her widow's bonnet with its long, beautiful and very expensive crepe veil.

When Landis came home the following summer, however, she knew she would never leave her mother again.

"It's the nights that are the worst when I have to sit propped up with the pillows," an incredibly fragile Victoria with enormous big brown eyes told her. "But I'm not afraid. I say the Twenty-third Psalm over and over. I know that whatever happens it is going to be all right. The Lord is our shepherd and He will lead us beside the still waters. I know that when we die we go to a brighter and an eternal life."

Landis walked to the window to hide her tears. To have a faith like her mother's was beautiful, she thought

with a little of pity and a great deal of envy. When Victoria spoke again, the old eager note was in her voice.

"Do you know, Landis, one night when I couldn't get my breath at all, I thought how strange it was to realize that perhaps I was dying, going out into another world; and then I thought how wonderful it would be because all my life I've wanted to go new places and have new experiences. And this was going to be the greatest journey I had ever gone on.

"I do hate to leave you, though, dear, for I'm afraid I'm leaving you in a world that is going to see a great deal of trouble. My mother saw three wars—the Mexican, the Civil War and the war with Spain. I've seen three wars, too, and you have seen two. What will be your third war or what the outcome of it will be no one can tell.

"The situation in Russia is bad and will be worse. It's all a house of cards that must collapse someday. If you could divide equally all the wealth in the world, by six o'clock that night it wouldn't make any difference, for the smart ones would have got it away from the foolish ones anyway. No laws made by a government can change human nature. I wish you'd bring me your father's book of Lincoln speeches."

When Landis had brought it to her, she opened at a marked page and read aloud:

"Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; it is a positive good in the world; that some should be rich shows that others may become rich and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise.

"Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build for him-

self, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built.'

"No government, however paternal it may be, can do for a man what he can do only for himself," Victoria added after she had finished reading. "And how can a government keep on being paternal long when it's only made up of poor frail humans who are out to get their own in the world just as the rest of us are? Whatever happens, Landis, stick to your father's Lincoln. He was one of the wisest men the world has ever known. Don't forget that when the medicine men and the hocus-pocus jugglers and the panacea playboys offer you a better scheme for living."

On other days Victoria's mood would be entirely different. She would toss feverishly from side to side in her chair at the upper window, planning this and that for Landis to do.

"I want you to sit down at my desk this afternoon and order a stone for Joe Hoover's grave," she said one day. "You know he was one of the Quaker boys who ran away with your father to war. When he died alone in St. Louis he had no money, no family, no friends at all and his landlady sent me a telegram because she found my name in his billfold. I had his body sent here and we had a little service here at the house for him. He's buried not far from our lot in the cemetery, but I never got around to ordering a stone for him. Poor Joe! You know his father wasn't a Quaker. He came from New York and married a pretty young Quaker girl whose family lived next to the Kings in Ohio. And then he went away in the night after about a year. I suppose he had a wife somewhere out in

the world.

"One day I went over to the cemetery to mark off the space on our lot. There is just room enough for you between your father and where I will be. If you marry—well, there just isn't any room there for your husband. I can't manage that, too, no matter how hard I might try." Victoria laughed and sounded like her old self. "And don't put any benches over there in the cemetery. I remember how your grandmother had a wrought-iron one there after your grandfather died. She used to go often and sit for hours. Then one night when she went at twilight she found a college boy and girl spooning on it. She was so disgusted she had Amos take it away the next day.

"There's just one thing more I want to tell you while we're on these funereal subjects. I don't care if you don't put up any stone at all for me, but if you do, I wish you'd have carved on it just 'Victoria Ash.' I've been Victoria Ash all my life more than I've been anything else, so why not bury me with that name?"

One day when she was feeling unusually strong, she asked that she be dressed and carried downstairs and to the piano. When she struck the instrument the volume which came from the strings was surprising. Her touch was sure and firm. It was Chopin she played. Landis closed her eyes and listened to the melody which sang out sometimes so tranquilly sane, sometimes so gloriously triumphant, sometimes so glitteringly adorned, and always so beautiful.

"That is my mother, Victoria Ash," she thought.

"Oh! there are so many things I wanted still to do," Victoria told her after she had finished playing. "I had

planned to build an elevator so I could get up and down stairs easily. And I wanted to get rid of this furniture I bought when we fixed over the house. I know now that it's dreadful. I've had the old daybed done over—the one Jim hid me under, you know, when the Indians came—and the old chest we had in the storeroom for so many years and didn't know it was one of the nicest things we had in the house. And there's my new old four-poster bed. I had planned to change the whole house. And now there isn't time.

"How can I leave my garden? My narcissus in the spring and my bridal wreath and my roses and my asters and the grapevine on the old barn that is so beautiful with purple grapes in autumn?

"How can I go where I'll never see the fields in harvest under the moon again or smell the sweet clover or hear the wind rustle in the corn?

"Oh! if I could only take the world with me when I go."

As Victoria's malady grew more serious, she became less and less resigned. Opiates soothed the pain of her body but tortured her mind. Often it wandered. "Little James loves his flannel dog with the shoebutton eyes," she told Landis once in the middle of the night. "I was dreaming now of Hallie, sweet Hallie. The mockingbird still singing o'er her grave. No one ever as beautiful as Hallie. That was a song the band played when the boys marched away in 'sixty-one. They tapped the refrain out on the side of the drumhead. Why don't we hear 'The Blue Danube' ever any more? Do you see all these people? They have come to hear me play. See, I have the garnet pin in my hair. It glistens when the light strikes it on the

platform. Mel wants to sing 'Genevieve' for an encore. Never forget how important it is always to look your best. Never forget it for a single day."

A little later she was back in the present. "I can't die now," she cried. "I haven't a decent dress to be buried in and there will be so many people at the funeral. I must have a new dress."

"There is your beautiful crepe with the black roses," Landis reminded her in a voice choked with tears.

"So there is." Victoria smiled with pleasure. "I'd forgotten it. Yes, it's a beautiful dress. It will do very well." She closed her eyes and went peacefully to sleep.

The next day, however, she insisted that she be taken from her own room to a guest room. "All my family have died in this room. I'm not going to stay here and die, too," she said. "I'm not going to die, I tell you. How do the doctors know? Look at what they told my mother and she lived over thirty years afterward. Tomorrow I'm going to get up and dress and go out in the car. There are so many things I have to do."

Victoria was right when she had said of James that no Ash ever wanted to die. The comfort of religion and the solace of philosophy availed her nothing when she stood at last face to face with death. She had spoken the truth when she said that she did not fear dying, but she had spoken it also when she said that she loved her world too well to leave it.

She had made no truce in all her long years with life and she would make none now with death.

"I will not die. I will not die," she said one afternoon

as the rays of sunset struck the counterpane of her bed  
and the college bell rang for the last class of the day.  
"There is still so much I want to do."

There was silence in the room.







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